CAR BUSTERS
No. 6 - Trimestriel
Septembre 1999

With: Français • Deutsch • Español

CAR Busters

N°6

Autumn '99

For a world without cars
Pour un monde sans voitures

Where We've Come

Where to Go From Here

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CAR Busters

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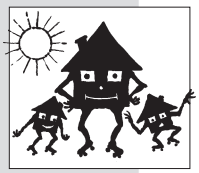

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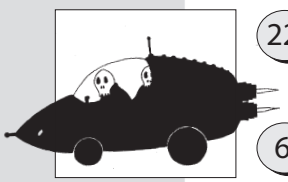

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Introduction • Einleitung • Introducción

No End-of-Millenium Rant Here

the Carbusters Collective

English

The past, the present, the future…

In this (almost) last issue of the millenium, we offer you a broad perspective of the history and the future (no future) of our bête noire. How we caught this disease, how it developed dramatically, and especially how to get rid of it before worse comes to worst.

Premise One: In a blaze of glory we finish the stinkiest century our planet has known since its formation—though it would be a lesser evil if it were mere olfactory discomfort .

Premise Two: Humanity is proud to have done such a good job, for we have undertaken everything to achieve this not very glorious result (The History of the Car, p.8).

Premise Three: Unless we really want to end in a barbecue, it's more than urgent to find radical alternatives and put them into practice (Ecocities, p.24).

You think this is just another fashionable millenium raving? Au contraire, unless we change our path, such raving predictions are set to become reality (Futurescapes, p.22).

Time to transform the highway of history into a joyful picnic of life?

Español

El pasado, el presente, el futuro…

Por este último número (o casi) del siglo (¡lo siento no pudmos contenernos!) los bindamos una amplia perspectiva temporal sobre la historia y el futuro (no futuro) de nuestra pesadilla. Como nos hemos enfermados tan mal, como se desarrollo trágicamente y mas que todo como deshacersela antes que ocurra lo peror.

Primer atestado: acabamos en apoteosis el siglo mas maloliente que conociera nuestro planeta desde el fin de su formación, y aún eso seria un menor malo si fuera no mas que un problema de un bienestar olfativó. Segunda atestado: podemos sentir orgullo de un trabajo bien hecho porque hemos tratado todo lo possible para llegar a ese glorioso resultado ("The History of the Car", p.8). Tercer atestado: es mucho mas que urgente de conseguir alternativas radicales y de ponerlas en prática ("Ecocities", p.24) a menos que queramos acabar en barbacoa. ¿(Quizàs) piensan ustedes que eso es aún uno de aquellos delirios millenaristas de moda? ¡Y como que no! Es (mas que) seguro que hemos hecho todo para favorecer los escenarios los mas catástroficos ("Futurescapes", p.22). ¡Entonces que, un esfuerzito mas! ¿No quisieran ustedes cambiar la autovia de la historia en un alegre picnic de la vida?

Français

Le passé, le présent, le futur...

Pour ce dernier numéro (ou presque) du siècle (désolé on a pas pu s'en empêcher!) nous vous offrons une large perspective temporelle sur l'histoire et le futur (no futur) de notre bête noire. Comment on a attrapé cette sale maladie, comment elle s'est dramatiquement développée et surtout comment s'en débarrasser avant que n'advienne le pire.

Premier constat : nous finissons en apothéose le siècle le plus malodorant que notre planète ait connu depuis la fin de sa formation, et encore ce serai un moindre mal s'il ne s'agissait que d'un problème de confort olfactif.

Deuxième constat : nous pouvons ressentir la fierté du travail bien fait, car nous avons tout entrepris pour parvenir à ce peu glorieux résultat ("The History of the car", p.8).

Troisième constat : il est plus qu'urgent de trouver des alternatives radicales et de les mettre en pratique ("Ecocities", p.24) à moins que l'on tienne à finir en barbecue. Vous croyez qu'il s'agit encore d'un de ces délires millénaristes à la mode ? Que nénni, l'humanité a bel et bien tout mis en place pour favoriser les scénarios les plus catastrophiques ("Futurescapes", p.22).

Alors quoi, un petit effort ! Ca ne vous dirai pas à vous de transformer l'autoroute de l'Histoire en un joyeux pique-nique de la Vie ?

Deutsch

Gestern, heute, morgen....

In dieser (beinahe) letzten Ausgabe des Jahrtausends bieten wir euch einen aktuellen Überblick der Vergangenheit und Zukunft (wenn es sie denn gibt) unseres enfant terrible. Wie wir diese Krankheit bekamen, wie sie sich drastisch schnell ausbreitete, und was für Heilungs-möglichkeiten wir haben, um das Ärgste zu vermeiden.

Feststellung Nr.1: mit Pauken und Trompeten beenden wir das übelriechendste Jahrhundert, dass dieser Planet je erlebt hat—wäre es doch nur der Gestank! Feststellung Nr.2: wir sind stolz auf diese Leistung, denn wir haben alles Erdenkliche getan, um den gegenwärtigen Zustand zu erreichen ("The History of the Car", S. 8). Feststellung Nr.3: es ist notwendig, tiefgreifende Alternativen zu finden und umzusetzen ("Ecocities", S. 24), falls wir nicht wirklich auf dem Grill landen wollen.

Nur ein weiteres Endzeit-Szenario? Wenn wir nicht gewillt sind, unsere Lebensweise zu ändern, könnten diese Bilder nur allzu schnell Realität werden ("Futurescapes", S. 22).

Also nun, ein bisschen Anstrengung bitte! Wäre es nicht nett, die Autobahnen der Geschichte in sprühende Picknicke des Lebens zu verwandeln?

Paper:
It's been 100% recycled Cyclus paper from the very first issue.

Notice:
Articles in this magazine do not necessarily reflect the opinion of Car Busters or its editors, however it's pretty bloody likely that they do.

Mission:
Car Busters, a project of European Youth for Action, aims to build and maintain the international car-free movement. The magazine is published quarterly to facilitate exchange and cooperation among activists and campaigners, inspire new activists and change the world.

"Progressive Cyclists Returning from the Hunt" is the title of this photo, sent in by reader Ursula Apel of Bingen, Germany. She credits Gary Larson, who drew the original "Vegetarians Returning from the Hunt" cartoon, which depicted a group of cavemen holding spears and carrying a giant carrot over their heads.

The Soft Car-Body Concept

This is a paradox that most of us are faced with. Though we would like our cities and then the countryside to get rid of the car as much as possible, every now and then we come up with something that tends to help the car industry and users, by reducing the nuisance of the car. I nevertheless propose and even give my idea to all car manufacturers:

Many of the injuries against pedestrians and cyclists (and animals) would be drastically reduced if cars had a soft body—really soft, non-metallic, plastic or composite. Something at least 20 inches thick (50 cm) that would immediately reduce the impact of the hard metallic edge against our soft bodies.

This new skin for cars could be a biological growth, synthetic or natural, with cells, vessels and nerves. We could come to see vehicles starting to feel and smell and touch one another. And why not, in two or three decades they could even learn to reproduce themselves, which would make them much more aware and careful for their offspring, so that at last, cars would be taught to behave.

Bruno Auci
St. Etienne, France

One Issue at a Time, Please

The demonstration-turned-riot in London on June 18 was The Daily Telegraph's headline article the next day. Among the most prominently listed sponsors of this "Carnival Against Capitalism" were the anti-car group Reclaim the Streets, and the pro-bicycling group Critical Mass.

According to The Telegraph, things were peaceful until after lunch, when many protesters had been drinking heavily and the mood became violent.

Protesting groups started "gratuitous and unprovoked violence against officers," hundreds smashed down the doors of London's futures market, 60 masked people burst into a bar and restaurant, smashing windows and throwing seats into the street and stealing beer, and hundreds attacked McDonald's restaurant, kicking in doors and throwing chairs through windows.

For transportation activists, these tactics are all wrong. The main reason is moral: Physical violence is damaging to individuals and to society and should only be used as a very last resort, and then only as a defense against even greater direct physical violence. In London, violence was totally uncalled for and appeared to be merely an expression of personal anger.

Second, violence is counter-productive for any environmental movement. People of many classes and political views support environmentalism, and most of them are alienated by violence.

Third, it is bad tactics to combine transportation activism with other goals, such as anti-capitalism or peace in Kosovo. Those who support you on transportation might disagree with you about capitalism or Kosovo, and so you will lose their support. As a former activist against the Vietnam War, for civil rights, against the Iraq War, etcetera, I believe that activists need to keep their eye on one ball at a time. To defeat one of Earth's most serious threats—the automobile—we must have the discipline to do what really works against that particular threat. Drifting off into a "Carnival Against Capitalism" will get us nowhere, and will in fact backfire.

Reclaim the Streets, and Critical Mass, need to tell us what on Earth they were doing supporting an action that extended far outside the transportation issue, with people who seemed more interested in venting their anger than in actually helping the planet.

Art Hobson
Fayettville, Arkansas, USA

[A London Reclaim the Streets activist replies: That Art relies for details of the June 18th Carnival against Capitalism on a report from the Telegraph, a right-wing newspaper known for its attacks on anti-road and ecology activists, is cause for concern. He might have looked for other, fuller accounts, before passing judgement. Contrary to the Telegraph's report the main perpetrators of gratuitous violence at the London event were the riot police while the "protesters" mainly damaged property—in fact a very productive tactic in the history of struggle.

Does Art actually know anything about the June 18th action, Reclaim the Streets (RTS) or Critical Mass other than the Telegraph's description? To be clear: the Carnival against Capitalism in London was part of an international day of events involving movements, groups and campaigns in over 40 countries taking action together "in recognition that the global capitalist system is at the root of our social and ecological problems." Its very point then was to highlight and act upon the connections between supposedly "single" issues.

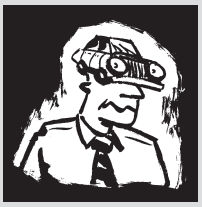
RTS not only supported the June 18th actions: it was an initiating and main organising force for the whole event. As for Critical Mass, it is not a fixed group so much as a practise that varies from place to place—on this occasion it was organised to disrupt the financial traffic of the City precisely in order to combine issues. Why? Because, as RTS has repeatedly emphasised, the "transportation issue" cannot be fully understood, still less solved, taken in isolation from its wider social and economic context.

It is not the automobile that is "one of the Earth's most serious threats" but capitalist social relations and a market system based on growth and competition of which car culture is symptomatic. Nor can transport activism be simply equated with anti-capitalism or anti-war. This is the politics of the shopping mall, taking your pick from the shelves of "issues" available, with little regard to how they interrelate.

Far from "getting us nowhere," explaining how the car issue is linked to other issues and encouraging action from such a perspective is the only way we will end the present environmental crisis while starting to build a free, ecological society.]

"We must bear in mind that sustainability has various aspects—ecological, economic and social. These three aspects have to respect each other, and this might mean that there are measures which serve one aspect but are not good for one of the remaining two."

- Dr. Michael Engel of the European Road Union, instructing the International Road Federation Conference on how to change a word's meaning, June 1999 in Lahti, Finland



CAR CULT REVIEW

Critical Shortage of Cars For Protest Drive in San Francisco

Yesterday's [July 23] planned "Critical Mass for Cars" protest ride through downtown San Francisco attracted plenty of publicity, controversy and international attention—everything, it seems, but cars.

Only about 15 vehicles showed up for the 4 p.m. ride, and at least one of them was filled with pro-bicycle protesters. The cars were outnumbered by a good-natured group of some two dozen cyclists who turned out to pace the motorists.

As it turned out, the event was a good advertisement for bicycle commuting. With the Lefty O'Doul Bridge on Third Street closed for four months of repair work, cyclists were the only people able to skirt the mile-long line of traffic inching across the Peter Maloney Bridge on Fourth Street.

"I'm disappointed," acknowledged Rolf Mueller, the businessman who put together the protest. "I expected at least 500 cars."

Mueller, who was driving a sport utility vehicle with a bike rack on the back, emphasised that his complaint was not with cyclists but with the city officials making transportation decisions. "Wanted: A Safe and Sane Traffic Policy in S.F.," read the placards taped to the sides of the few cars that showed up.

That sentiment was just fine with the bicyclists waiting for the cars to move out.

"They want to promote a fair traffic policy and, hey, we're for that," said Debbie Hubsmith of the Marin County Bicycle Coalition.

While the title of the car protest was a none-too-subtle gibe at the city's monthly Critical Mass bike ride, the cyclists ended up with the last laugh, as the June ride drew about 800 participants. A crudely lettered "Idiot Mass" sign where the cars were parked also showed the cyclists' feelings.

Mueller's crusade, successful or not, struck a nerve in San Francisco. The planned protest was Topic No. 1 on radio stations yesterday morning, and Mueller found himself a focus of attention, even on England's BBC.

The people who did show up called on the city to change what they see as a bias against motorists. But Mueller, looking over the handful of cars in the demonstration, seemed less convinced that this was the start of something big. Is a movement being born? he was asked.

"I hope not," he said. n

- San Francisco Chronicle

Children's education, as recently spotted on the back of an American cereal box.

But Who Are These Enemies of the Automobile?

James A. Dunn, Jr. writes in his 1998 book "Driving Forces: The Automobile, Its Enemies and the Politics of Mobility":

"Given the tremendous success of the automobile, one might expect a virtual consensus that such an achievement should be preserved and enhanced. One might expect the experts to recognize the automobile's virtues as much as much as the people and concentrate on making it even better. But no!

"In discussions of transportation policy, a growing number of very vocal critics and analysts see the automobile not as a solution but as a problem, and auto policy not as a success but as a failure. [Shocking! - eds.] They want Americans to take public transit, ride share, pedal bikes, or walk—in other words to abandon the very same cars that provide mobility and a sense of empowerment and equality...

"The auto provides a kind of individualist equality that is particularly well-suited to American values. It is true that there is a very large economic gap between the driver of a battered 1980 Chevette and one who owns a brand new Mercedes. But when they both are on the open road, or stuck in a traffic jam, or circling the block searching for a parking spot, there is a fundamental equality in their conditions as automobilists that unites them across class, racial, ethnic and religious lines as few other aspects of society can."n

THE UGLY AUTO-AMERICAN
BY AVIDOR©99
HEY! HOW DO I GET TO VENICE?
I'M SORRY, THE GLOBAL WARMING HAS SUBMERGED IT!
THAT'S WHAT YOU GET FOR NOT BUILDING IT ON LAND WITH ROADS AND CARS!

Industry Watch

Digging the dirt on your favourite corporations.

Who Says

The major car manufacturers are quick to point out that diesel engines are more efficient than petrol engines, and so less damaging to the global climate. Yet they declining to mention the urban particulate pollution issue, which is suffocating India.The Centre for Science and the Environment's Right to Clean Air Campaign has found that diesel, a major particulate pollution producer, is responsible for one death every hour in Delhi, India. Ford, General Motors, Toyota and Mercedes-Benz are currently flooding the Indian market with diesel cars, in order to profit from the fuel's low price.

The chances of the government willingly putting restrictions on diesel use are limited. "The economy of the country has become intertwined with diesel," explains journalist G. Ananthakrishnan. "The entire commercial road transport industry revolves around this fuel, which is priced less than half the petrol price. " Meanwhile the Indian people spend Rs 4,550 crore each year dealing with the health problems caused by air pollution.

The cheap fuel, aimed at helping economic growth and public transport, also ends up a subsidy to richer Indians, being the minority who can afford cars at all.

While diesel poses major social and environmental problems for India, major car companies are always able to see its great marketing potential. n

The "Clearing the Air" round table, focusing on how the car industry and the World Bank can work together to cut CO_2 emissions (and make a profit), did not seem to lead to Earth-shattering results. The minutes do, however, record the following car industry concluding comments (which do not, luckily for them, represent official vehicle company policy):

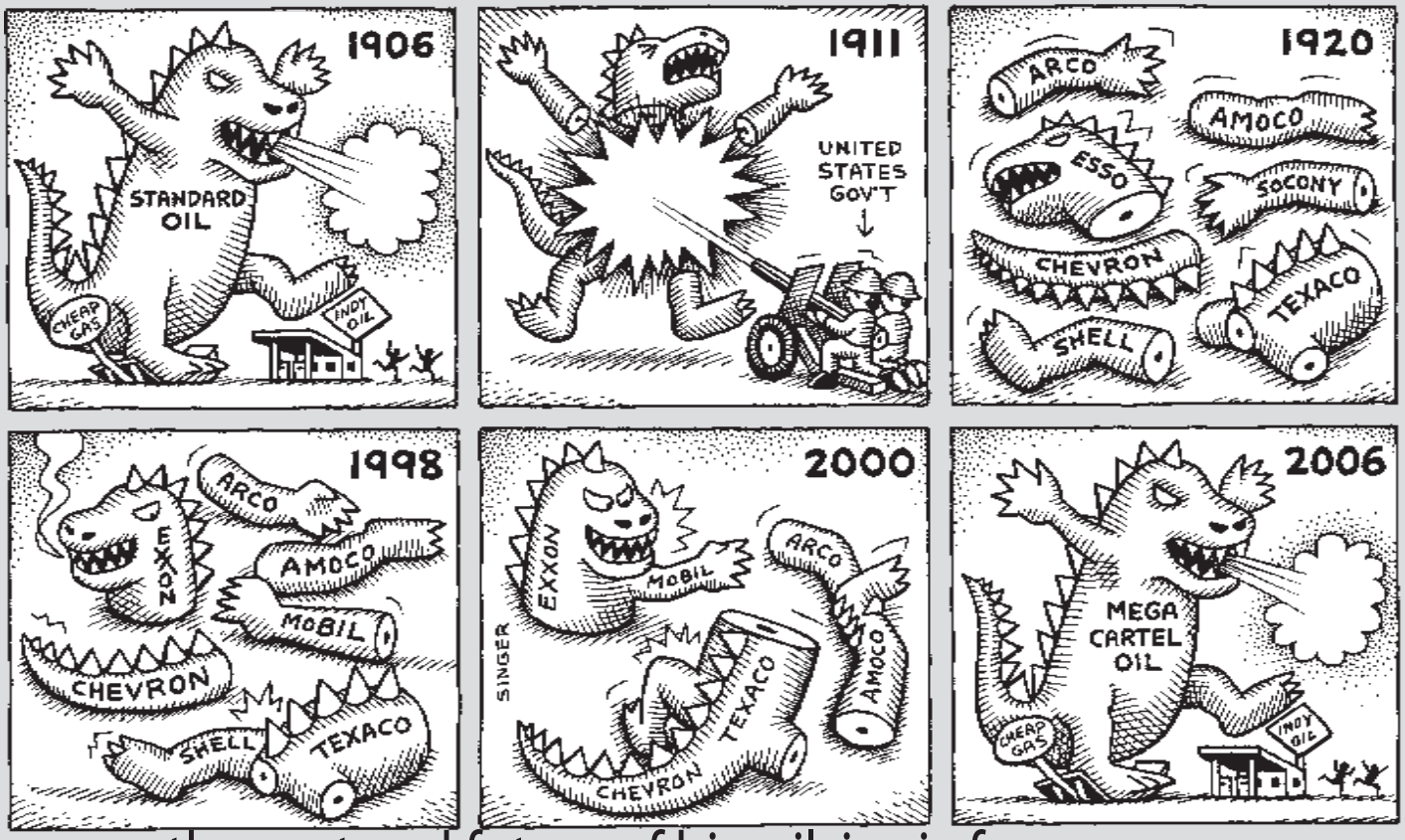
• The build up of anthropo-genic CO_2 is inevitable, therefore any company that voluntarily limits CO_2 is volunteering to go out of business.

• We must approach CO_2 by focusing on local problems.

• We will not end up producing small, inexpensive vehicles, but rather large, integrated systems and their components.

• Right now, there is not enough of a crisis for us to do anything. n

The full round table minutes are available at <www.back-to-work.com/clearingtheair.html> or from Car Busters.



the past and future of big oil, in six frames

Disclaimer: The publishing of this cartoon should in no way be construed as to condone either cheap petrol or small, independent petrol companies.

Dossier #1
EIB

Background info. on the suspects

Europe's Biggest

The European Investment Bank: "furthering European integration by promoting E.U. economic policies." It sounds like a nice enough goal, yet this giant bank—lending even more than the World Bank—is one of the great funders behind European road development. It's also known as the least transparent of the international lending institutions.

Established in 1958 and autonomous from E.U. governments, the EIB is currently busy lending money to criss-cross Central and Eastern Europe with highways. Projects include the MO Motorway in Budapest (which violates many Hungarian laws; see page 20), the Berlin-Moscow road which will threaten Poznan, Poland's water supply, and many projects in the former Yugoslavia.

The bank lends money in the E.U. and as far away as Latin America. Its extensive funding in Central and Eastern Europe is part of the driving force opening up the region to the globalised market economy. By bringing transport infrastructure up to Western standards (a challenge for many countries struggling to pay for health and education), more and more countries are eligible to join the ever-expanding E.U.

While the bank has been funding some rail links, it seems public transport is not where its interests lie. In 1998 the EIB spent nearly four times more on road transport than rail investment—mostly high-speed rail—and ten times more on roads than on urban transport. n

For more information on the European Investment Bank, contact CEE Bankwatch Network, FOE Hungary, c/o MTVSz, Budapest, P.O. Box 123, 1450 Hungary; <jozseff@bankwatch.org>.

If you are interested in fighting not just local traffic, but the institutions that help cause European transprt problems, contact A SEED Europe, P.O. Box 92066, 1090 AB, Amsterdam, the Netherlands; e-mail: <frank@aseed.antenna.nl>.

to be continued...

Bethbuster on the Boat

Bethan Stagg runs away from both Car Busters and Western Europe to Romania's waterways.

I can see no cars. I can see no roads. A Car Busters' fantasy? I am sitting on a boat in the Danube Delta, where transport can be a tiny wooden kayak or a towering naval ship.

Myself and four other visiting activists (including new Car Busters staffer, Sina) are hosted by the "traffic police" of the Delta. Whether you have a local kayak or a Turkish ship you must register with this "Capitan" to ensure control of the traffic levels in the Danube. If only there was such control over Europe's motorways!

Here pollution problems consist of the disposal of rubbish and discharge into the Delta from motorboats, added to uncounted amounts of sewage and industry spills having been carried downstream. In the early '80s the Delta suffered the equivalent of a giant motorway project: Ceausescu (former national leader) allowed expansion of the waterways, to enable passage of 15,000-tonne cargo ships. Fortunately the ever-changing watery habitat is now a protected biosphere reserve.

Elsewhere in Romania, transport can be a sputtering, smoky old car or a horse and a cart. Carts are paradoxically in traditional wood with modern truck tyres. Trains are mainly an unhurried rolling stock which will stop at inexplicable intervals. Tickets are little pieces of cardboard with prices scribbled on.

The regular train stops are usually sleepy little stations that may even boast a corn field, a garden and a gaggle of geese. The larger stations feature the obligatory handful of Coca-Cola◊ stands, a few local women selling roasted seeds or sweets, and a flock of begging children. Walk outside and again you might see Coca-Cola◊, this time in an advertisement painted the entire way up a concrete 20-story post-war apartment building.

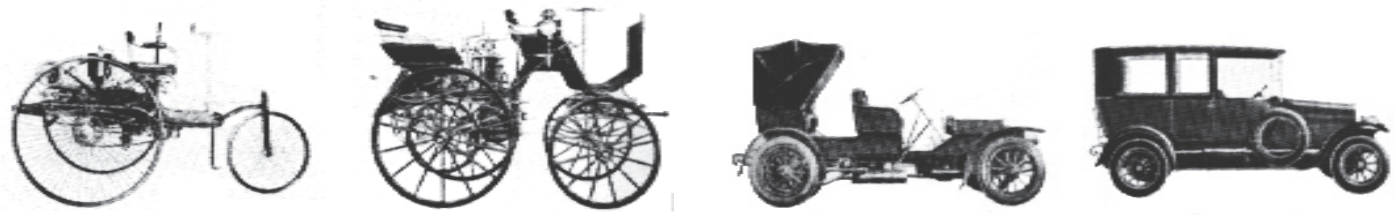
When railways cross roads there are no barriers or lights; cars are expected to give way as soon as they see a train. This may not always happen, as I witnessed on my train journey to the annual "Ecotopia" gathering. An overturned train lay crushed together, metal peeling off its sides. A van driver had tried to rush across the junction, with disastrous consequences.

Trying to transport yourself in former Communist countries can be tricky. It seems mobility was actively discouraged under the iron hand of Com-munist times, and today I can attest that it can still take six hours to go 176 kilometres by train.

Maps are hard to find, but at least they are no longer deliberately distorted, as under Soviet rule. Stations and street names are not always marked. When I asked for train times in Croatia and Slovenia my questions were greeted with shrugged shoulders, as if asking the impossible.

In fact, hitchhiking might be one of the most reliable means of transport. In Romania it is much more socially accepted than in Western Europe—due to the relatively small number of cars. You will find young people, grandmothers and whole families side by side in the flimmering heat, waiting to be picked up in exchange for a small fee. Car sharing really seems to work here.

If you are lucky you might even catch a ride on one of the many Frutti Fresh◊ trucks transporting this colourful national lemonade in its non-recyclable plastic bottles back and forth acoss the land. And while you are sipping on the sugary grapefruit drink, take a look around and enjoy the fact that not too many roads are crossing the landscape—yet. n



For Love of the Automobile

Far more than a means of transport, the automobile has become a cultural icon for our times. Examining its history from the late 1880s through to the 1920s, Sachs shows how the car gave form to the dreams and desires embedded in modern society, and in so doing reshaped our very notions of time and space, our individual and social values, and our outlook on progress and the future.

Wolfgang Sachs

Masters of Time and Space

It was certainly easier to imagine the superiority of the motor than to count on it. To be a "motorist," as the racy sport and pleasure drivers of the cities soon came to be called, one needed more than money; muscle and courage were required as well. Automobiles resembled untamed animals in the early years, with sudden swings of mood and a tendency to dangerous reactions. To charge across the land, manning the helm with skill and stamina and utter presence of mind, leaving onlookers behind in the dust from the road—who could still believe that happiness rode on the back of a horse?

Mechanised speed and power created a sharp perceptual contrast between the age of the automobile and the era of the horse, and between the experience of individual mobility and reliance on the railroad. The horse and carriage, the traditional insignia of privilege, had declined in rank over the course of the 19th century, to the point that whenever a train overtook a coach, the rail passengers would laugh sneeringly out the windows. So ladies and gentlemen of a better sort had to condescend to train travel as well.

Against this background, the automobile accrued what one could call a restorative significance. The ideal of the era of the carriage could arise anew with none of the frailties of organic horsepower. No wonder the first generation of motorcars resembled horse-drawn carriages with the motor attached. Only after the turn of the century would design no longer reflect the adoption of the automobile by the aristocracy and upper bourgeoisie, who used its speed and power to display their social superiority. The automobile caused no immediate revolution in mobility, but it did in the dominant symbols of prestige.

"Never in my life have I been cursed at so frequently as on my automobile trip in the year 1902," wrote one Otto Bierbaum, "not to mention all the wordless curses: shaking fists, stuck-out tongues, bared behinds, and others besides."

While other mechanical novelties, like a typewriter or a vacuum cleaner, make no impositions beyond their owner's four walls, the car requires free passage in the streets and demands also of those without a car that they behave according to the rules of its existence. Thus the automobile was from the start not only a technical problem, but a problem that concerned the streets and conventional conduct. A history of the automobile must be equally a history of the environment and behaviour.

The conquest of the streets was bound to meet with objection; they were, after all, inhabited by pedestrians, horse-drawn conveyances of various types, children at play, and all kinds of fowl.

The noise of protest pressed all the way into the measured world of parliament, as evidenced by the automobile bill brought before the Prussian legislature in January 1908. Representative Count Cramer expounded in its defense. While his friends did not want to put any obstacles in the way of the automobile movement, he said, surely the latitude extended to wild motorists must have limits.

Conservative opinion in particular, with guaranteed appeal to a general ire against city dwellers' presumptuousness, condemned the car—meaning the upstart bourgeoisie. Inhabitants

"A day's production at Opel." Ad from

"People of Graubünden, Wake Up!" Anti-car poster, 1920.

of the countryside were especially agitated; they felt as if a carpet of clatter, stink, and dust were being drawn over them. Shying horses, frightened by the motorised monsters, frequently bolted and overturned the cart, not only on top of the load of potatoes but on the buried driver as well. At night, people cursing the power that roared down upon them had no recourse but to leap from the road into ditches.

What delight the drivers, sitting arrogantly behind the windshield, took in the damages is evident from a journal entry of 1906 by Rudolf Diesel on his first trip:

"What a dust storm we stirred up leaving Italy! Powdery limestone dust lay five centimeters thick on the street. Georg raced along, demanding from the car all it had to give…and behind us there swelled a colossal cone. The entire Piave Valley was thick with the fog…We outraged the pedestrians with a gas attack—their faces pulled into a single grimace—and we left them behind in a world without definition, in which the fields and the trees in the distance had lost all colour to a dry layer of powder."

No wonder tempers flared, the more so since village inhabitants themselves had to pay for damage to the streets and commons. Little wonder, too, that the rage blended with class hatred, for those who raced along the country and village streets, who drove speedily off leaving the peasants with the mess, were indeed those nouveaux riches from the cities.

In 1912, Dr. Michael Freiherr von Pidoll of Vienna published a "Call to Protest" claiming for the public in general a right to the street: "The public street is not meant for express traffic; it belongs to the milieu of the city…Should, perhaps, the public streets be kept 'free of people'?"

The Swiss canton of Graubünden seemed to motorists of the time the very refuge of backwardness. Those stubborn Swiss wanted literally to ban progress and have nothing to do with automobile traffic. The columns of the European automotive press were filled with fire and fury, and readers were even exhorted to boycott Switzerland. And, in fact, the "automobile question" was a bone of political contention in Graubünden for 25 years.

The Bündner Tagblatt newspaper commented: "Peasants, herdsmen, and livestock owners and traders, after all, still live in Graubünden, and they will hardly permit the stink wagons to drive them off the streets. Or should they resort to self-defense? (We would advise them to immediately, even if at the cost of violence. - The [Bündner Tagblatt] editor.)"

Not that the prohibition brought peace to the mountaintops. A clamour for special permits set in, until the prohibition was as shot through with holes as the local cheese. This, in turn, got the irritated people involved, and a petition campaign forced a popular referendum in 1910. The car ban won impressive confirmation: 11,977 votes against 3,453.

Even between 1920 and 1924 several referenda to permit automobile

continued on page

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Weitaus mehr als ein reines Fortbewegungsmittel ist das Auto längst ein wichtiges Element unserer Kultur geworden. Wolfgang Sachs untersucht die Geschichte des Autos vom Ende des letzten Jahrhunderts bis in die 20er Jahre hinein und zeigt, wie sehr es die Träume und Wünsche der modernen Gesellschaft formte, und somit unsere Wahrnehmung von Zeit und Raum, persönlichen und sozialen Werten und unsere Einstellung zu Fortschritt und zur Zukunft veränderte.

Am Anfang war das Auto Luxusspielzeug und Statussymbol der Reichen, die durch die Gegend sausten, Chaos stifteten, den öffentlichen Raum zerstörten und andere Leute in Gefahr brachten.

Unzufriedenheit gab es allerorten, der Schweizer Kanton Graubünden verbot Autos sogar von 1900 bis 1925. In Deutschland beschäftigte die Debatte die Regierung und der Österreicher Michael Freiherr von Pidoll brachte 1912 eine Schrift namens «Der heutige Automobilismus. Ein Protest und Weckruf» heraus, in welcher er die weitreichenden sozialen Konsequenzen des Autos aufzeigte. Jedoch kam in der gesellschaftlichen Debatten bald ein Argument zum Vorschein, welchem kaum durch die Sorge um die Zustände auf den Strassen widersprochen werden konnte: das Wohl der deutschen Industrie stand in Frage, und wer konnte davon unberührt bleiben!

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Mucho mas que un modo de transporte, el coche llego a ser un icono cultural de nuestro tiempo. Viendo su historia a partir del fin de los años 1880 hasta los años 1920, W. Sacks muestra como el coche ha dado forma a los sueños y deseos arraigados dentro de la sociedad moderna, y asi reorganiso nuestra noción del tiempo y del espacio, nuestros valores individuales y sociales, pero tambien nuestro punto de vista por el progreso y el porvenir.

La historia del coche empieza como objecto de lujo y como símbolo de la posición social de los ricos quienes conduciendo a toda velocidad, hacian estragos, destruyendo los espacios publicos y ponian en peligro la vida del prójimo. En la opinión publica, el descontento fue muy propagado. Hasta un cantón suizo desterro los coches entre el año 1900 y el año 1925. Dos partidos lucharon dentro del cuerpo legislativo alemán. En 1912, un escritor austriaco publico "el automovilismo de hoy: un llamamiento a la protesta", reconociendo las tremendas consecuencias sociales del automovilismo. Pero, en la balanza del pro y del contra, un argumento aparece pronto, en el cual los que se preocupaban de los problemas de tráfico, podian diffícilmente oponerse. Sus oposicionistas cambiaron de tono, y repentinamente, el bienestar de la industria alemana volvia a ser discutido, ¡y quien podia quedarse indiferente a esto ! Ahora, sin poner caso a las ventajas y los inconvenientes del coche, solamente una particularidad de la automóvil tenia realmente una importancia: fue un producto rentable con mercados que la industria alemana no podia permitirse abandonar a otras naciones.

Los costos de la vida cotidiana, según los indus- trialas

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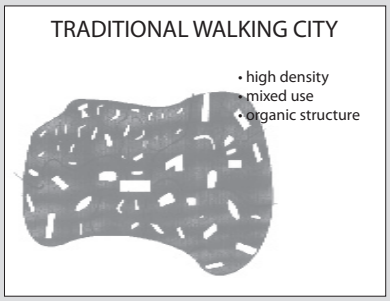
The Forgotten History of Automobile Development

Peter Newman and Jeff Kenworthy

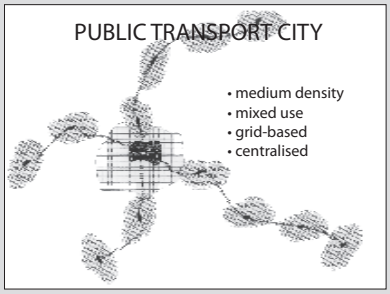
It's not just a matter of changing our personal habits— our cities' form itself largely determines our level of car dependence. In order to understand this, one must learn from history, and move away from the "Car City," and recreate the "Public Transport City" and "The Walking City."



Up to 1850 in Europe

Between 10,000 and 7,000 years ago, the first cities were settled in the Middle East. From then until the middle of the 19th century, the form of cities everywhere was based on walking.

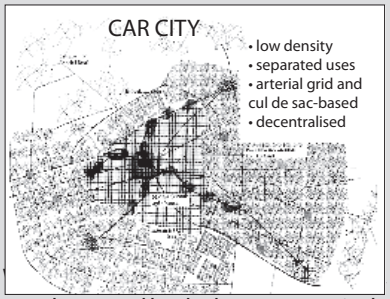
In Walking Cities, destinations can be reached on foot in half an hour on average, and thus rarely are these cities more than five kilometres across (an average trip being 2.5 kilometres).



1850-1940 Dominant city form in the industrial world

From about the 1860s in Europe and the New World, the old Walking Cities began to collapse under the pressure of population and industry. A new city form developed that enabled the city to accommodate many more people at somewhat reduced densities while keeping to the half-hour average accessibility maxim. Cities pushed increasingly outward as the train (first steam, and then electric) and tram or streetcar (first horse-drawn, then steam, then electric) allowed faster travel to occur, creating the Public Transport City.

In the U.S., beginning in the 1930s, a consortium of General Motors, Firestone Tires, Mack Trucks and Standard Oil shut down the streetcar systems in 44 cities, breaking anti-trust laws but fined only $5,000. This commercial decision basically ended the Public Transport City era in the United States, particularly once the Federal Highway System began in 1956. European cities have tended to retain their transit-oriented form and tram systems, though in recent decades they have begun to disperse around their main corridors based on car travel.



1980s onwards: USA, then Australia progressively

supplemented by the bus, progressively became the trans-portation technology that shaped the city, particularly in North America and Australia. It became possible to develop in any direction, first filling in between train lines and then going out as far as 50 kilometres for the average half-hour journey. The Auto City was born.

Low-density housing became more feasible, and as a reaction to the industrial city, town planners began separating residential and business centers by zoning. This helped to increase journey distances. The city began to decentralise and disperse. Overall density of the Car City decreased to between 10 and 20 people per hectare.

With the availability of cars, it was not necessary for developers to provide more than basic power and water services, since people could make the transport linkages themselves. As this "ungluing" process set in, the phenomenon of automobile dependence became a feature of urban life. Use of a car became not so much of a choice but a necessity in the Car City.

Now, after 50 years of automobile-based growth, such cities have spread almost to the limits of comfortable car commuting. Some cities are developing fast commuter trains that allow people to live up to 80 kilometres out of the city and still commute. But there is little else that people can easily reach in the rest of the city other than by car.

The automobile appeared to offer freedom in space and time—to live anywhere in a city and get quickly to all urban destinations regardless of location. The transport engineering and planning models in the Car City of this era simply had to predict the necessary infrastructure to provide for this new kind of freedom.

No land-use planning was needed; housing and business could be placed virtually anywhere with individuals having the freedom to make the linkages themselves—as long as they had a car.

Unfortunately for the engineers and those who felt transportation utopia had arrived, it was never possible to truly achieve this freedom. The unfettered Car City "dream" soon becomes a nightmare of traffic. n

This article was adapted from Sustainability and Cities: Overcoming Automobile Dependence, 1999. The book is available for CAN$60 plus 15% shipping by mail order from Detour Publications: 761 Queen St. W., Ste. 101, Toronto, ON M6J 1G1, Canada; <www.web.net~detour>.

One hundred years ago, and already the industry sets out to take over the planet. Cover of The Motorcar***, Magazine of the Central European Motorcar Association, 1899.***

traffic were defeated. Only in 1922, when the central administration in Bern intervened and ordered the opening of streets to through traffic, was the way cleared, so that, in 1925, a scant majority, 11,318 to 10,271, decided to concede the right of way to the automobile to Graubünden, at least on the main streets.

Pidoll is one of the very few authors of the time who recognised the far-reaching social consequences of the automobile, with its increasing monopolisation of streets and surfaces, to the exclusion of non-motorised travel and the public sociability that went with it.

"The streets and squares of the metropolitan areas and towns are more than mere thoroughfares, like, for example, railroad tracks…They are the milieu in which the personal, social, and economic life of the city in no small part takes place… Automobile traffic in its present-day form involves…the constant endangerment, disruption, and mobilisation of passersby or other vehicles, as well as a severe infringement on those community relations that correspond to an advanced culture."

The right to the street, the right of the public to remain unburdened and secure, was a cause for concern not only in Germany, but in car-crazed France as well, and in the United States, the model case of motorisation. But nowhere do we find anything like a systematic weighing of the advantages and disadvantages of this new technology from a political angle. The power of established fact caused the protest to grow quieter over time and degenerate into grumbling, even if as late as 1911 such a respected periodical as The Economist still struggled with the troubling question "Is the loss of agreeableness and comfort, is the burdening of the public to be justified by the pleasure enjoyed by comparatively few individuals?"

The Germ of Future Greatness

After years of debate over what to make of the automobile, things got moving at the national level when, from 1906 to 1909, the German parliament struggled to pass an automobile liability bill. The divergent interests met head-on: angry conservatives, battling on the side of the people, insisted that drivers be held liable in principle, unless they could prove otherwise, while automobile associations, fearing financial strangulation, pressed to avoid legal regulation altogether. Only the Social Democrats appeared to have no opinion on the automobile.

But an argument soon surfaced, ever more insistently, which those concerned with conditions on the street could scarcely counter. While they continued to lodge complaints about overturned wagons and disturbances to rural peace, their opponents changed their tune, taking up the national anthem: the well-being of German industry was in question, and who could remain indifferent to that! This argument suddenly moved the discussion into another dimension, one that had nothing to do with the advantages or disadvantages of driving a car. Attempts to counter the social damage by the automobile ran up against an image of society in which only one characteristic of the automobile truly mattered: it was a profit-

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Wie auch immer die Vor- und Nachteile des Autos, von nun an zählte nur noch eins: es brachte Profit durch Märkte, welche die Industrie nicht an andere Nationen abgeben wollte. Nach Meinung der Industriellen waren die negativen Auswirkungen auf den Alltag zweitrangig im Vergleich zu den Versprechungen der Zukunft. Wie der Franzose Baundry de Saunier bereits zu Beginn des Jahrhunderts bemerkte: «Der Motorwagen, wie auch immer verdammt, wird für immer und ewig mit uns bleiben, er wird nicht aussterben, denn er entspricht der Logik des ökonomischen Fortschritts und den Notwendigkeiten unserer Zeit.»

Mit der Unvermeidbarkeit des Autos entwickelte sich eine gesellschaftliche Verkehrsdebatte. Die Fahrer mussten «qualifiziert» sein, die Fussgänger sich «richtig» verhalten, und von allen wurde erwartet, die neuen Bedingungen, welche die Einführung des Autos mit sich brachte, zu akzeptieren.

Von oben beginnend durchzog es nach und nach alle Schichten des Gesellschaft. 1932 hatten nur ca. 1% der deutschen Bevölkerung Zugang zu einem Wagen. Kaum jemand erwarb ein Auto aus Gründen der Nützlichkeit oder gar Notwendigkeit, dies sollte erst der Fall sein mit der Umformung der konzentrierten, vom öffentlichen Nahverkehr abhängigen Stadt in die heutige, weitausgebreitete «Autostadt» (siehe Artikel S.10). Stattdessen erwarb man einen Wagen, um einen kultivierten Lebensstil zu pflegen.

Die Oberschicht hatte mittlerweile die Angebote von Mode, Mahlzeiten und Möbeln ausgeschöpft, und das Auto wurde neuer Luxusgegenstand der entstehenden Konsumgesell-

(quienes entendieron el escape), podian ser descuidados en favor de las promesas del porvenir. Como Baudry de Saunier ya lo recalco a la vuelta del siglo: "el coche mecánico esta aqui de una vez para siempre y a pesar de las oposiciones, no morira, porque corresponde a la logica del progreso economico y las necesidades de nuestra época ". Con la inevitabilidad del coche, considerado como formando realmente una parte del ambiente, empezamos a desarrollar lo que podemos llamar un discurso de entrenamiento sobre el comportamiento en el tráfico: los conductores tenien que ser "calificados", los peatones comportarse "correctamente", esperando que cada uno accepta las nuevas condiciones traidas por la introducción del coche y conformarse a éstas. La automóvil esta arraigada dentro de la sociedad entera. En 1932, solamente un porciento de la población alemana tenia acceso al coche. Ni siquiera nadie consideraba adquirir un vehiculo privado solamente porque eso podria ser utile o necesario. Eso podia ser el caso hasta que la forma física de la ciudad sea cambiada de la "ciudad de transito" lineal en la "ciudad automóvil" extensa (ver el articulo pagina 10). Al contrario, la gente compraban un coche para cultivar un estilo de vida agradable, más allá de la rutina cotidiana.

Ahora que las altas sociedades tenian completamente refinados sus gustos de modas del vestido, del estilo culinario, del adorno; un nuevo producto, la automóvil, fue in- tegrada

Arriving in the world of cultivated pleasure. Poster, 1924.

making commodity with markets that German industry could ill afford to abandon to other nations.

"The infant automobile industry," the Frankfurter Zeitung determined, "cannot today endure any experimentation at all, not to mention any tests of strength. Precisely because it bears within itself the germ of future greatness, it should be sheltered and defended by the state, since it will doubtless be called upon to play a significant role in the economic life of our people."

The automobile presented itself as the "personification of progress altogether"; thus it was clearly right that it prevail over the objections of the "retrograde" and "philistines." Those who failed to understand would soon enough be forced by the power of established fact to see the error of their ways, as Baundry de Saunier had already stressed at the turn of the century:

"The mechanical carriage is here once and for all, and, however one might persecute it, it will not die, because it corresponds to the logic of economic progress and the needs of our time. To resist it is precisely as foolish as to struggle against time, age, the work of the human mind, perpetual motion, against the forces of nature, which exercise an influence on us and which our bad mood can never alter."

In the face of so strong a consciousness of national responsibility, the critics became subdued and saw their questions—whether the automobile was necessary at all, and whether its advantages—grow strangely insignificant.

Given the commandment of industrial might, the prudent and cautious could not but appear to be enemies of the nation and enemies of progress, as the world market cast its long shadow over debates as well as newspaper coverage.

With the automobile's inevitability taken for granted, there began to develop what might be called a traffic education discourse. Drivers have to be "qualified"; pedestrians should behave "correctly" and not "wrongly"; carriage drivers and cyclists have to show "consideration"; and one and all; in view of the new requirement for discipline, are to be seen as in need of training. Only in this way could an "order" be created on the public streets that would minimise the dangers of motorcars.

"The majority of accidents occur precisely because other types of street traffic are altogether unwilling to accept the new conditions brought about by the introduction of the motorcar and to conform with them," an outraged doctor pronounced in a 1908 essay. "It must become habitually engrained in the entire population to use the roads as little as possible wherever sidewalks are available, to look left and right upon entering the road, to walk and drive only on the right, even when the street is empty, and not to stand around in the street."

Respect for the automobile had to be introduced into daily perception and habit—just another bit of civilisation, which, once gained, would allow progress to make its home in Germany and bestow upon the national economy a bright future. But would driving remain an exclusive form of play, or could the masses be motorised, too?

The Beauty of Function

After 1924, as post-war inflation was overcome and things picked up again for a few years, new strata of potential buyers were drawn to the automobile. Particular groups—management personnel, engineers, or doctors and lawyers—placed a high value on acquiring a car, the symbol of modernity.

They could at least compensate their deficient sense of status with the consciousness of progress, thereby underlining their claim to a position at the top. Even those well-heeled sorts who had not trusted motorised devilry at all before the war relinquished their reservations and joined the trend of modern times.

The 1924 car count of 130,346 had climbed to 489,270 by 1932: about one percent of the German population now had access to a car. Although the motorcar by no means commanded a mass market, nonetheless it was outgrowing its role as a sports item for technology enthusiasts and becoming a consumer good for seekers of status. It became imperative that manufacturers apply their ingenuity to the operational con-venience of their vehicles. If a techno-logical product is to become a mass commodity, it must become user-friendly.

No longer were embellishments added or decorations pasted on; instead the functional form itself was considered a complete expression, so much so that, as Le Corbusier suggested, a fine automobile could assume a rank equal to the Parthenon.

Up until now one criterion of beauty had been "uselessness." From now on, the more functional the machine, the more beautiful it was. Function-alism even attempted to balance the chaos of cities through a spacious separation of work and residential areas [which would later render many of us car-dependent - eds.].

The World of Ladies and the Spirit of Extravagance

The automobile sank its roots into society from the top down. Not until 1970 were more than half of German working-class families able to taste the pleasure the upper classes had been parading before them for 50 years. Thus the luxury market, rather than mass con-sumption, was the midwife of the automobile, for into the 1930s the industry geared its production above all to customers who looked not to price, but first of all to beauty and perfor-mance. Scarcely anyone conceived of acquiring a private car because it might be useful or even necessary. [It would not become such until the development of the "Car City" (see page 10) - eds.] On the contrary, one purchased a car to cultivate a pleasurable lifestyle beyond the daily routine.

The automobile had become mate-

rial for conversation in better circles. Now that their tastes in clothing fashions, dining style, and parlor furnishings were fully refined, a new product, the automobile, was incorporated into luxury consumption, into the culture of gratification, which itself was vitalised, above all, by the society of ladies.

The association between ladies and the automobile first cleared the way for the establishment of driving as a model for consumption. At no other time does one find so many placards and commercials that present women (better, ladies) together with cars. The automobile was slowly invested with the emotional aura of consumption, for it was the figure of the lady that embodied the domain of private gratification.

In the course of the 19th century the division between home and the world of professional work came to be reflected in a polarisation in the world of sentiment as well. The man, at least to hear him talk, was concerned with a sense of duty, accomplishment, and thrift; but the (bourgeois) woman developed in opposition a conscious-ness of taste, leisure, and lifestyle. Consumption occurred primarily in the private realm, in which the woman set the standards.

"In the time of chauffeurs and open wagons," a French author explained, "women were not in love with the automobile, or at least, it was not a true love…Today this is not true in the slightest. Since the fairer sex has been granted the comfort of easy entry at the side, upholstery, suspension, and protection from the weather, without threat to hair and makeup, since then the women love the automobile… For them the automobile is something that shines, costs much money, and therefore is very chic …For the manufac-turers it is a decisive turn that they, the women, induce the masters of creation to purchase a large number of auto-mobiles."

The rising middle class drew its nourishment ulti-mately from two underlying cultural trends: the Protestant ethic, which furthered production through thrift and a drive to perform; and the spirit of extravagance, which, through sensual gratification and vanity, stimulated consumption. Not only the entre-preneurial spirit and factory discipline but also extravagance and a joy in buying had to triumph if true consumers were to be made of self-sufficient citizens.

In this process the values of consumption crystallised around the 19th-century lady. Thus in early advertising illustrations it was young women who summoned customers to purchase new consumer goods, whether a cigarette, a bicycle, or, indeed, an automobile. The industry came along as the fulfiller of feminine values, so that family life—the sphere of consumption—could be rendered economic. This is why the automobile appeared to the astonished masses of the '20s as a shining article of consumption. n

This article was reprinted with permission from Sachs' "For Love of the Automobile: Looking Back into the History of our Desires," which covers the cultural history of the car up to the 1980s. The English version edited and translated by Don Reneau was published by UC California Press © 1992. The original 1984 German version is out of print. Detour Publications carries the book; see address page 30.

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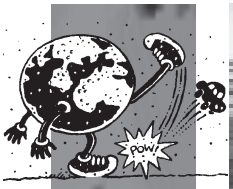
schaft—welche massgebend vorangetrieben wurde durch die Damen der Gesellschaft. Ein französischer Autor schreibt: "Für die Hersteller ist eine entscheidende Entwicklung, dass die Herren der Schöpfung von den Damen überzeugt werden, eine grosse Anzahl von Autos zu kaufen." Männer schienen mit einem Gefühl von Pflicht, Strebsamkeit und Sparsamkeit erfüllt, wohingegen die (bürgerlichen) Frauen das Bewusstein von Geschmack, Genuss und Lebensstil entwickelten.

Die aufstrebende Mittelschicht zog daher ihre Energie aus zwei unterschwelligen kulturellen Strömungen: der protestantische Arbeitsethik und dem Geschmack der Extravaganz. Nicht nur der Unternehmergeist und die Disziplin der Fabriken, sondern auch der Luxus und die Kauflust mussten siegen, wenn selbständige BürgerInnen in wahre Konsumenten verwandelt werden sollten. Die Welt der Frauen stellte die Werte des Materialismus dar, wohingegen sich in der Welt der Jugend das Neue spiegelte. Aus diesem Grund erschienen in den damaligen Anzeigen und Werbekampagnen hauptsächlich junge Frauen, welche den Kunden Konsumartikel schmackhaft machten, seien es Zigaretten, ein Fahrrad oder eben ein Wagen. Der Gesellschaft der 20er Jahre erschien das Auto daher als ein erstrebenswerter, glitzernder Konsumgegenstand. n

al consumo de lujo, a la cultura del placer, aquella misma animada por la alta sociedad de damas. Como lo explico un autor francés:"para los fabricantes, es un momento decisivo en lo cual las mujeres incitan los señores de la creación a comprar un montón de automoviles". El hombre, según ese autor, fue interesado por un sentido del deber, del cumplimiento y de ahorros, en cambio la mujer (burguésa) desarrollaba en oposición, una conciencia de buen gusto, de tiempo libre y de un cierto modo de vida.

Asi, la nueva classe mediana se alimento de dos modos culturales subyacentes: la ética protestante y un espiritu de extravagancia. No solamente el espiritu de empresa y la disciplina de fábrica pero tambien la extravagancia y una alegria de comprar debian triunfar si ciudadanos autosuficientes se volvieran en consumidores conformes.

El mundo de las damas expresaba los valores del consumo mientras que el mundo de la juventud expresaba el de la novedad. Así en las primeras campañas de publicidad, fueran chicas quienes incitaban los consumidores a comprar nuevos productos como: un cigarrillo, una bicicleta o claro un coche. Por eso, el coche aparecio a las masas populares sorprendidas de los años 20 como un objecto de consumo lleno de resplandor. n



photos: Hans Bouton

On June 27, anti-car activists occupied a motorway in the centre of The Hague, The Netherlands. After an hour, police ended the action and arrested over 100 people.

Skaters Take Over Dutch Highway

On Sunday, June 27, more than 200 people attended a street rave on a highway in the centre of The Hague. Before the party two people had already been arrested for leafletting for the event.

When de Utrechtsebaan was transformed into a party zone, the police agreed the party could go on until five o'clock. Five minutes later the police told organisers the party was over. The crowd had to move back to Central Station. On their way there everybody got arrested while in a small tunnel. People who identified themselves were released immediately with a 120 guilder fine; people who refused to disclose their identity were released later that night with no fine.

The Hague's police force has an increasingly bad reputation. This year already several demonstrations have been beaten up violently without warning or explanation.

The combination of rave and direct action is not (yet) very popular in The Netherlands. Earlier street raves in Amsterdam and Utrecht were also attended by 200 people. Police response also differs from city to city. Amsterdam suffers from the same stupidity as The Hague, while Utrecht parties have been more or less tolerated. In some cities monthly "masses" occur, but attendance is so low, 50 or fewer, that they hardly ever become "critical."

Groenfront!, Earth First!'s Dutch branch, organised the rave in protest at the ever-expanding car terror. Under the label "Groenfront!: Earth first, no violence, no compromise" direct actions have been conducted against harbour expansions in Amsterdam and the fifth runway of Schiphol Airport. Today Groenfront! concentrates on fighting the Betuwelijn, an obsolete railway planned through the green heart of Holland. n

- Jan Thomas

This article was based on "Rolschaatsen op de snelweg," published in Ravage actieblad #288. Groenfront! can be contacted at: <http://huizen.dds.nl/~groenfr>; e-mail: <groenfr@dds.nl>.

"Cabin Crew" Protest at British Airways

Friends of the Earth campaigners, dressed as "cabin crew" and "ground controllers". protested outside the annual general meeting of British Airways on July 13.

"Ground controllers" guided British Airways shareholders into the meeting with signs urging the company to "stop polluting the planet with tax-free fuel."

At the entrance, three "air hostesses" and a "steward" handed out "boarding cards" explaining how British Airways has opposed plans of taxing aviation kerosine, even though the airline's chairman, Lord Marshall, has called for a tax on business energy use.

"Flying is the most polluting form of transport there is," said Simon McRae, FOE's Aviation Campaigner. "Yet airlines pay no duty on the fuel they use and therefore have little incentive to conserve fuel or control their emissions. The tax exemption gives airlines an unfair advantage over other forms of transport, encouraging people to travel in the least environmentally-friendly way."

- Friends of the Earth

Bike Summer in 'Frisco

The plan for Bike Summer was simple—starting with the July 30 Critical Mass ride there would be a month of fun, bikecentric activities organised by volunteers and attended by anyone interested in bicycles. It worked.

Cyclists came from across the USA, as well as several from Europe and even one from Japan. "There's a real solidarity," said organiser Josh Switzky.

Activities ranged from guerilla bike lanes to film nights, from water-pistol aided rides to panel discussions.

Michael Smith, a local transport activist and a key organiser, considers the month of bicycle-focused events to have been an important step for bike activism.

"I call it post-Critical Mass," he said. "Critical Mass is a great thing, but we need something that goes beyond it. We want more people to be involved. Not everyone is going to be an activist, so we're trying to be inclusive. Part of what I hope [Bike Summer] does is show people anyone can put on an event, and anyone can try to change things."

The great thing about Bike Summer, as exemplified by such events as "Learning to Ride a Unicycle" and "Bi-Coastal Bike Activism," is that people were able to have fun and become politically engaged at the same time.

"It's definitely a political event," Smith noted, "but then it's also a cultural one and a social one."

- Bike Summer

Switch Off Campaign

It started with 50 fake road signs which appeared around Bristol, England, one night, asking drivers to switch off their engines while waiting in traffic. The media loved it, and local parliamentarians pledged their support. The culprits—the Bristol Cycling Campaign—then distributed fluorescent stickers with the same message, followed quickly by an action on the M32, then a postcard campaign. In July the city council discussed whether to erect official signs, while campaigners picketted outside. In October the council voted yes.

Bristol now boasts the first "Please switch off engine while waiting" signs in the country, with other cities set to follow their lead. "Perhaps for the first time there is a crucial change in public opinion that car fumes are fundamentally undesirable," state the proud campaigners.

St. Petersburg Bikes Banned

The city made a decree on August 16 which bans bicycles, horses and roller skates on 24 major streets of St. Petersburg, Russia. Also, the city traffic police now require bicycles to be registered and get licensed. (Another bureaucratic nightmare for ordinary people and more money for the state/police.)

Some one hundred bicyclists had a protest the week before: ironically, Governor Vladmir Yakovlev is the head of the St. Petersburg Federation of Bicycle Sport and is a cyclist himself. So the protest started at Yakovlev's house and went to city hall.

- Laure

The Glen Under Threat

Activists responded quickly to news that chainsaws were about to descend on the Glen of the Downs, Ireland. By dawn of August 29 over 60 people had gathered to defend this broad-leaved forest, classed a Special Area of Conservation. Yet nothing happened.

While protesters maintained their vigil at the site, the campaign's legal team spent the next day applying for an injunction to stop the felling. As a result, Wicklow County Council assured the court it would not fell before an October 19 Supreme Court hearing.

The Glen has been continuously occupied for over two years in opposition to the council's plans to convert the two-lane N11 into a four-lane motorway. The scheme would involve the felling of over 1,700 trees, and leave the ancient wood-land irreversibly damaged.

The campaign has caught the imagination of the Irish public. Felling the trees would be a public relations disaster for the county council. Whether or not the campaign is ultimately successful in stopping the road, it has successfully opened a national debate on the sacrifices made in the name of Celtic Tiger Ireland.

- Éanna Dowling

To get involved, contact Earthwatch: 20 Grove Road, Rathmines, Dublin 6, Ireland; tel: +353 1497 3773.

Devastated Communities Sue Pemex Oil Company

Mexican agricultural and rural workers are taking Pemex, the country's state-run oil company, to court on charges of damaging the environment in the Gulf of Mexico. The plaintiffs are being represented by the attorney general.

The Mexican Environmental Rights Centre and the Mexican Ecologist Movement stated that in 1998 alone, Pemex's oil-drilling activities in the gulf region caused 28 serious accidents, resulting in a total of 17 deaths, 20 injured and more than 4,000 people evacuated. According to biologist Gonzalo Ortiz, 75 percent of rainfall recorded in the Gulf states was found to be highly acidic.

A spokesperson for the plaintiffs, Isaul Rodriguez, declared that local people no longer were being fooled by offers of cash and gifts—strategies used by Pemex and state governments in the past.

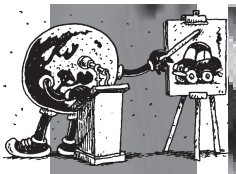
- Project Underground

June 18th Rocks Spain

June 18th in Madrid saw 300 people take over a square in the city's commercial area, with music, dancing and street theatre until two in the morning. The action was part of a global protest coinciding with the meeting of the G8—the leaders of the world's seven richest countries plus Russia. Actions happened in at least 16 countries, tackling not only transport issues, but also our growth-dependent economic system, believed to be the cause of many transport problems in the first place.

Meanwhile in Sant Cugat, just 13 people managed to close the motorway while they rode their bicycles the 20 km into Barcelona, where a street was turned into a beach and fried potatoes given to passing drivers, a 700-person Reclaim the Streets partied until 11 p.m. and 100 people created an organic vegetable garden on a demolished squat site.

For more information on June 18th, see <www.gn.apc.org/june18> or contact Car Busters.



Art and Revolution, the Free Nigeria Movement and Project Underground commemorate the anniversary of Ken Saro-Wiwa's execution, outside the Shell building, November 1997, San Francisco.

Larger than Life

David Solnit

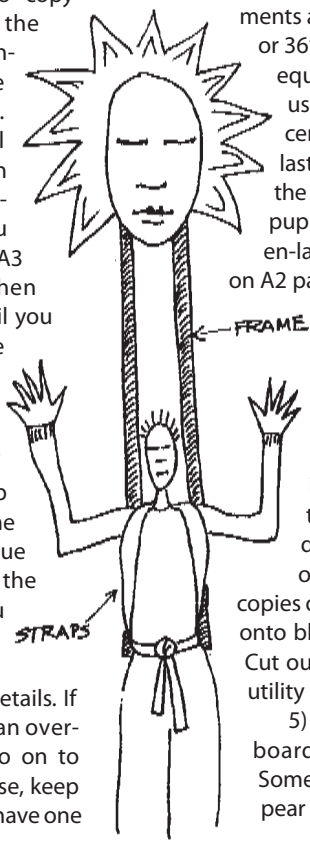
The Ultimate Action Prop: Giant Puppets in the Likeness of Specific People

The Art and Revolution street theatre collective has used this simple quick technique to make easily recognisable giant puppets of famous—or infamous—public figures: President Clinton, San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown or, on the positive side, Nigerian environmental leader Ken Saro Wiwa and former Irish political prisoner Roisin McAliskey.

The Face

1) Find and clip a newspaper, magazine or other photo of the person you want to puppetise. A clear head-on shot in black and white works best.

2) Go to a photo- copy shop and enlarge the image. Find a high-quality copy machine that will enlarge. Some machines will enlarge more than others. Enlarge repeatedly until you fill the space of an A3 sheet (11"x17"), then keep enlarging until you have slightly more than one quarter of the image on an A3 sheet. Make sure there is enough of the image to overlap when you cut off the white edges and glue it together. Keep the image as light as you can without losing any of the dots. If it's too dark you lose details. If you have access to an oversize copier then go on to step three. Otherwise, keep enlarging until you have one eighth of the image on each A3 sheet and skip step three. Cut off the white edges and glue them all together.



3) Some photocopy shops have "oversize" copiers that make enlargements and copies onto A2 paper (24" or 36" wide) for a few dollars or the equivalent. The oversize copier usually enlarges up to 200 percent (twice as big). Enlarge your last enlargement of the photo to the desired size. For a 3-4- metre puppet (10 to 12 foot) we usually en-large the head as big as will fit on A2 paper.

4) Cut the image out, rounding any rough edges. Sometimes it's hard to see the edges—drawing them with marker or pencil can help. Trace two copies of the edge of the cut-out face onto blank cardboard without folds. Cut out the two heads with a sharp utility knife.

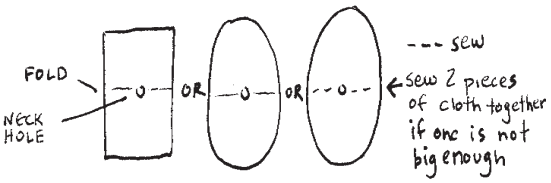
5) Paste the face onto the cardboard, trying to avoid wrinkles. Some of the wrinkling will disappear when it dries.

6) Make a cardboard tube to fit your puppet frame. Glue, staple or tape the tube vertically on the back of your face-pasted-to-cardboard, once it is dry. Now glue, staple or tape your second piece of cardboard onto the other side of the tube, stapling and glueing the edges of the two sheets together.

7) Paint, using watered-down latex or acrylic paints. Highlight the light areas and darken the shadows. We often leave the texture of the photocopy visible through the paint.

The Costume

The simplest costume to make is a giant poncho. Fold over one big piece of cloth and cut a hole for the neck. If your cloth is not wide enough, sew together two pieces at their edges, leaving a hole for the frame to go through.

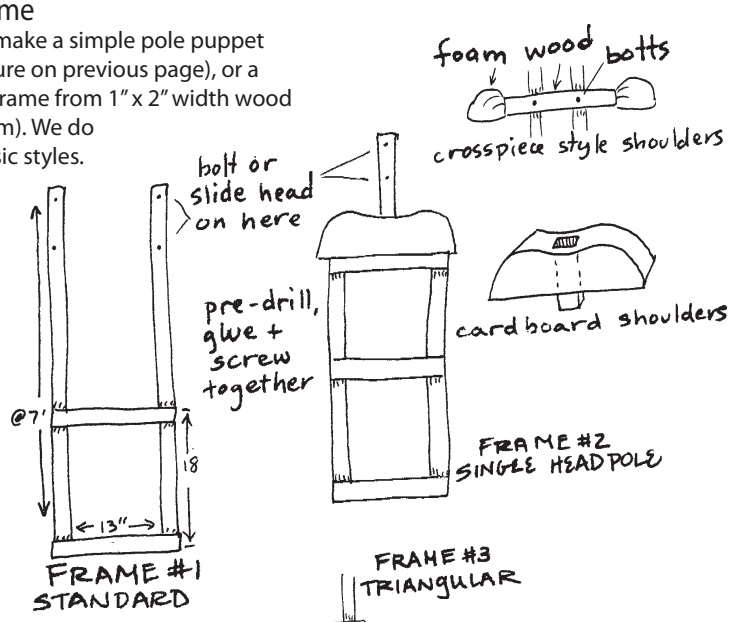


Contour or fringe the bottom edge. Add fringe or other decoration with white glue or hot glue. Cut a hole to look through. Staple, or attach the costume to the puppet with ties—see the picture on the next page.

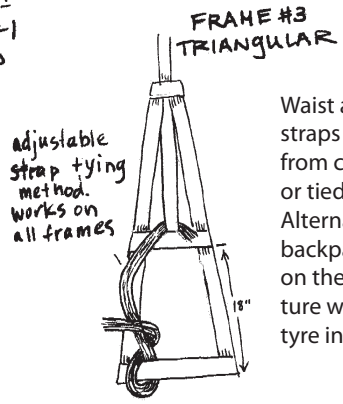
For more on Art and Revolution contact them at +1 (415) 339-7801 or see the group's web site: <www.agitprop.org/artandrevolution>.

The Frame

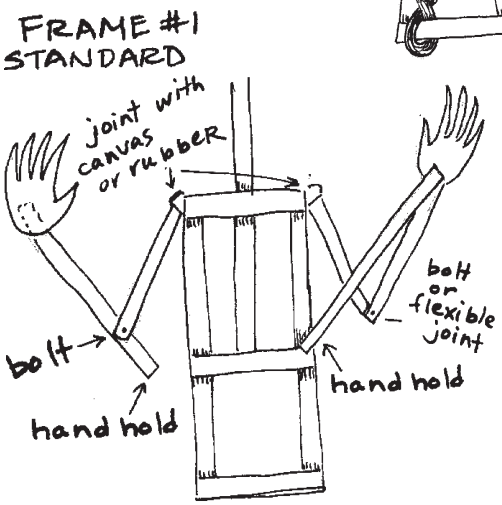
You can make a simple pole puppet (see picture on previous page), or a sturdier frame from 1" x 2" width wood (2.5 x 5 cm). We do three basic styles.



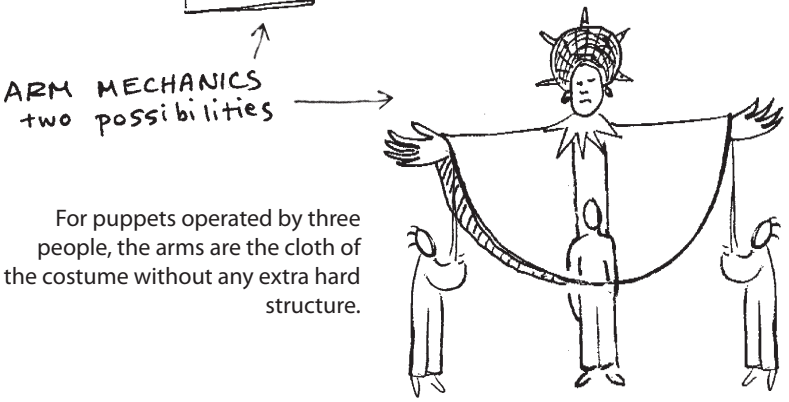
If the puppet is to be operated by only one person, create jointed arms to support the hands.



Waist and shoulder straps can be made from cloth and stapled or tied onto the frame. Alternatively, use an old backpack frame and tie on the wooden structure with bike tyre inner tubes.



Cut hands out of cardboard and use newspaper to build up the fingers and palm. Paper maché with newspaper (for strength) and then brown paper.



For puppets operated by three people, the arms are the cloth of the costume without any extra hard structure.

The article opposite and these diagrams first appeared in Wise Fool Basics, by K.Ruby, a new and impressive handbook of street theatre, puppetry and community arts techniques. See the Resources page to order a copy. For more on Wise Fool contact them at 2633 Etna Street, Berkeley CA 94709, USA; or see <www.zeitgeist.net/wfca/wisefool.htm>.

TRANSLATION

Traduction • Traduccíon • Übersetzung

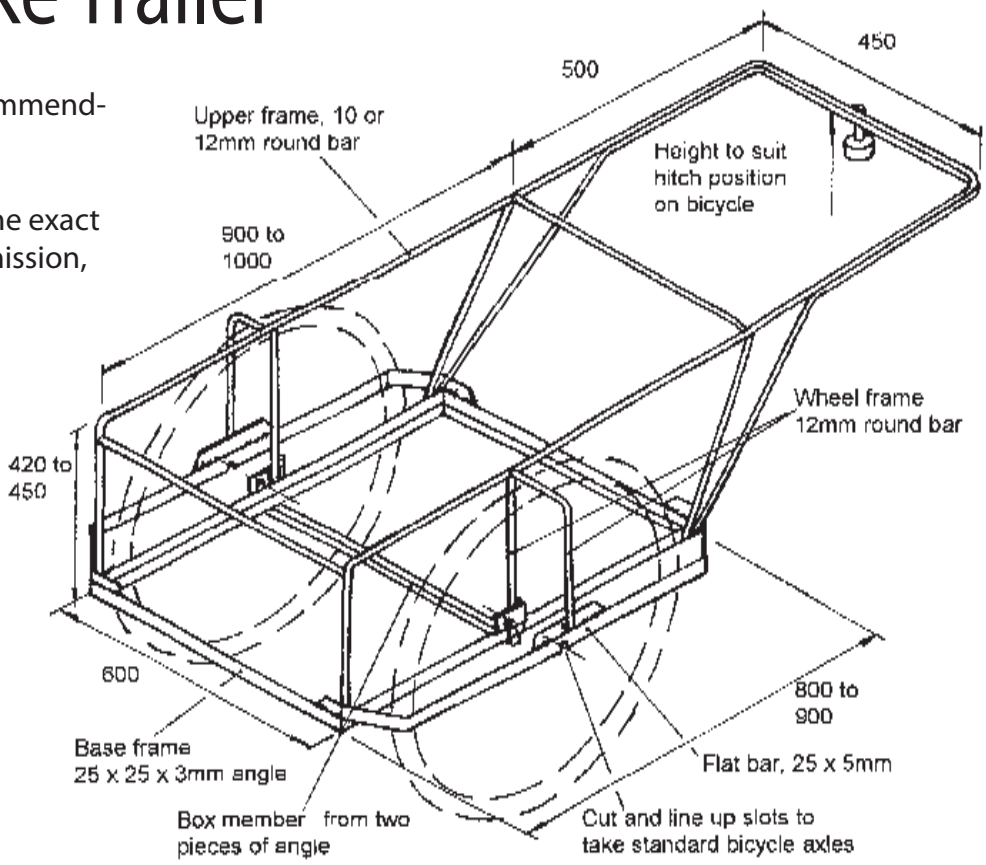
Des marrionnettes géantes ressemblant aux personnes connues sont d'excellents supports d'actions. Trouvez une photo en noir et blanc de la personne choisie, agrandissez-la (la photo, pas la personne) encore et encore sur une photocopieuse jusqu'à ce qu'elle couvre huit feuilles A3. C'est plus facile de le faire avec des photocopieuses grand format, disponibles dans certains lieux, faîtes pour imprimer ou photocopier sur des feuilles A2. Collez-les ensemble et tracez la forme de la tête sur deux feuilles de carton rigide. Découpez les deux têtes. Collez et agraphez ou scotchez les feuilles des deux côtés d'un long tube cartonné (verticalement). Sinon, utilisez du bois pour faire un cadre rigide (voir les croquis ci-contre). Agraphez et collez ensemble les bords des deux morceaux de carton. Utilisez de la peinture latex ou acrylique diluée. Illuminez les zones claires et assombrissez les ombres. Le costume le plus simple est un large poncho avec une ouverture permettant à l'utilisateur de voir. n

Eine hervorragende Kunstform für Aktionen ist das Herstellen von grossen Puppenköpfen, welche berühmt-berüchtigte Persönlichkeiten darstellen können. Einfach ein Schwarzweiss-Foto der Person auf dem Kopierer vergrössern, bis es 8 A3-Bögen bedeckt. Leichter geht es auf einem A2-Kopierer im Kopierladen. Die Bögen zusammenkleben und den Umriss des Kopfes auf zwei feste Pappstücke zeichnen. Beide Köpfe ausschneiden, auf einen von ihnen das Gesicht kleben. Die zwei Pappstücke auf die Seiten einer langen, stabilen Pappröhre tackern, die Ränder gegeneinander kleben, und die Röhre mit Seilen an deinem Körper befestigen, Als Alternative kann aus Holz ein kräftigerer Rahmen gebastelt werden (siehe Zeichnung). Zum Schluss das Gesicht bemalen, helle und dunkle Gebiete betonen. Als einfaches Kostüm kann ein Poncho aus Stoff hergestellt werden, mit einem eingenähten Guckloch für den Puppenträger. n

Muñecos gigantes parecidos a las personas conocidas son excelentes soportes de acciones. Conseguir una foto en blanco y negro de la persona elegida, ampliarla (la foto, no la persona) mas y mas con une copiadora hasta que cubra ocho hojas de (tamaño) A3. Es mas fácil de hacerlo con copiadoras de grande tamaño (disponibles en algunos almacenes) hechas par imprimir o fotocopiar en hojas A2. Pegarlas juntas y dibujar la forma de la cabeza sobre dos hojas de cartón rigido. Recortar las dos cabezas. Pegar y agrapar las hojas a ambos lados de un largo tube de cartón (en posición vertical). Sino, utilizar madera para construir un cuadro rigido (ver los croquis al lado). Agrapar y pegar juntos los bordes de los dos pedazos de cartón. Utilizar pintura látex o acrílica diluiada. Iluminar las zonas clara y oscurecer las sombras. El traje mas simple es un poncho amplio, con un hueco para permitir que el usuario pueda ver. n

Make Your Own Handcart/Bike Trailer

The following design was recommended to Car Busters,
but we take no responsibility if
it doesn't work for you. Since the exact wording is reprinted with permission, please excuse the
dry writing style. Have fun!


450
500
Upper frame, 10 or 12mm round bar
Height to suit hitch position on bicycle
900 to 1000
Wheel frame 12mm round bar
420 to 450
600
800 to 900
Base frame 25 x 25 x 3mm angle
Flat bar, 25 x 5mm
Box member from two pieces of angle
Cut and line up slots to take standard bicycle axles

This is a lightweight handcart that can also be used as a bicycle trailer. The design shown is fabricated from steel sections that are generally available at comparatively low cost, angle section for the base frame and reinforcing bar for the upper frame.

Most of the load will be carried by the central cross-member of the base frame, which therefore needs to be strong and rigid—a box-section is preferred; the one shown here is formed by welding together two lengths of angle section.

If the floor panel needs more support, then additional cross-members may be added, in which case a single angle section may be used for the central member in order to reduce weight.

The floor and side panels should be as light as possible. Possible options are:

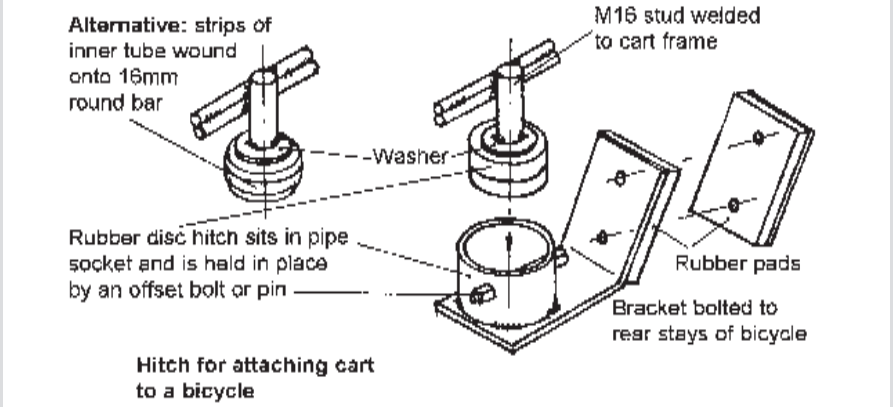
Floor

1.2mm to 1.6mm thick sheet steel (for example scrap sheet from an oil drum); 3/8"-thick plywood; wooden slats about 12 to 15mm thick.

Sides and Ends

1/4" plywood or wooden slats may be used but these are relatively heavy—the preferred option is welded wire mesh (for example, 12g wire x 25mm mesh size).

The base frame has outrigger members to support bicycle-type wheels. Standard wheels are suitable for loads up to about 120kg when operating on fairly smooth tracks, but for higher loads and/or rough tracks some form of strengthened bicycle-type wheel is needed. Bicycle tyres and axles give low rolling resistance and low friction respectively, thus minimising the effort needed to pull the cart, which is essential if it is to be used as a bicycle trailer.


Alternative: strips of inner tube wound onto 16mm round bar
M16 stud welded to cart frame
Washer
Rubber disc hitch sits in pipe socket and is held in place by an offset bolt or pin
Rubber pads
Bracket bolted to rear stays of bicycle

Hitch for attaching cart to a bicycle

This second diagram shows details of a simple hitch arrangement which enables the cart to be coupled to a bicycle. Rubber discs cut from a scrap car or truck tyre fitted over a pin on the trailer sit inside a socket made from water pipe which is welded to a bracket for bolting to the rear stays of the bicycle below the saddle.

Alternatively, strips of scrap inner tube may be wound onto the pin to form a ball which sits inside the pipe socket. This arrangement damps out impacts and provides a quiet, smooth ride.

A number of other simple hitch arrangements are also possible. The basic requirement is that the hitch should be strong and rigid in the direction of pull, but flexible in other directions to allow for cornering and up and down movements of the bicycle and trailer when travelling over uneven ground. n

Diagrams and text from the book "Low-Cost Load-Carrying Devices," page 80-81, reprinted with permission from the International Labour Organisation. The book is available from Intermediate Technology Publications, 103-105 Southampton Row, London WC1B 4HH, U.K.; tel: +(44)171-436-9761; fax: +(44)171-436-2013; itpubs@itpubs.org.uk; <www.oneworld.org/itdg/publications.html>.

How to handle them

Journalists Who Come to Your Action

George Monbiot

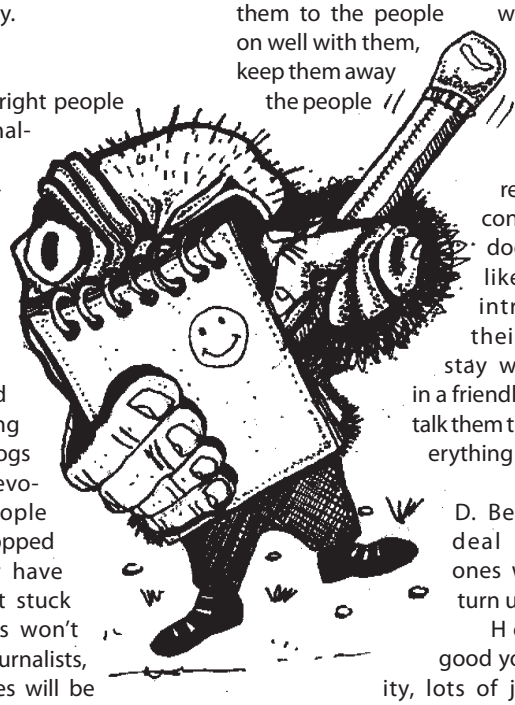
This is Part Four of Monbiot's seven-part article covering many aspects of dealing with the media. Part Three, covering the ins and outs of press releases, appeared in Car Busters #5.

The whole media exploitation process is about news management, and this is just as much the case once journalists get to the action as when you're trying to attract them. You've got to give the best possible account of what you're doing and the clearest possible explanation of why.

This means:

A. Make sure the right people talk to the journalists.

Different people do different things best. Some are brilliant at building treehouses or digging latrines, but not much good at being charming to the running dogs of the counter-revolution. Some people will have just dropped a tab of acid or have last night's vomit stuck in their hair. This won't endear them to journalists, who in most cases will be having enough trouble crossing the cultural divide as it is.



Talking to the press is something of an art form: you must be charming, persuasive and well-briefed. Best of all, you'll have practised, by convincing your friends to pretend to be hostile reporters.

B. Be careful, but don't come across as suspicious.

Some of them will be there to help you, others will be there to get you. Sometimes the ones out to get you will pretend to be out to help you. The only real safeguards are: to know who they all are. Ask them who they are and who they work for. Some journalists are notorious for negativelt portraying the movement. You should find out who the dodgy ones are before the action, so you'll know to be ultra-careful if they turn up, not to say anything stupid or risky. Be friendly towards them, whoever they are. Bite your lip, even if you hate the bastards.

C. Be a tour guide.

Take them around the site, show them what you want them to see, and steer them away from what you don't want them to see. Introduce them to the people who'll get on well with them, and keep them away from the people who won't be able to restrain their contempt. If it doesn't seem like a major intrusion on their privacy, stay with them, in a friendly way, and talk them through everything they see.

D. Be ready to deal with the ones who don't turn up.

However good your publicity, lots of journalists won't be able to make it, but might still be interested. They'll want to know what's happening and how things are going, so there should be at least one person on-site with a working and charged-up mobile phone whose number has been posted on the press release.

Journalists are suckers for on-the-spot reports, so when they ring, put some excitement into your voice. Give them plenty of colour, make them feel they can see it. n

Contact Car Busters to receive the entire seven-part article via e-mail, or send us some postage money in any currency to get a hard copy.

TRANSLATION

Traduction • Traduccíon • Übersetzung

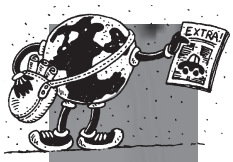
Pour exploiter (plutôt que d'être exploité par) les medias, George Monbiot donne quelques tuyaux pour s'occuper des journalistes lors de votre action. Ne laissez pas n'importe qui parler aux médias. Trouvez quelqu'un de charmant, de persuasif et bien informé. Entrainez-vous avec des amis jouant le rôle de journalistes hostiles et pratiquez ainsi les réponses. Sachez reconnaître chaque journaliste et savoir pour qui il travaille. Prenez grand soin de ne rien dire de risqué qui pourrait se retourner contre vous. N'ayez pas l'air soupçonneux. Soyez amical envers eux, qui qu'ils soient. Ravalez vos paroles, même si vous detestez ces salauds. Emmenez-les autour du site et montrez-leur ce que vous voulez qu'ils voient. Sans être indiscret, restez avec eux et parlez-leur de tout et de rien. Ayez au moins une personne sur place avec un téléphone portable dont le numero correspond au contact de votre communiqué de presse, et s'il le faut prête a répondre sur-le-champ à des interviews. Enfin soyez passionné dans votre voix, donnez-leur plein de couleurs; faites en sorte qu'ils voient ou ressentent bien votre idée. n

Beim Umgang mit Journalisten, die ihr zu einem Pressetermin bei eurer Aktion eingeladen habt, sollten einige Dinge beachtet werden. A: Lasst die richtigen Personen mit den Presseleuten sprechen - ein bisschen Einfühlunsvermögen, Redetalent und Überredungkunst ist schon vonnöten. B: Vorsicht ist geboten, aber Misstrauen oder Unfreundlichkeit sollten nicht offen gezeigt werden. Einige Journalisten werden auf eurer Seite sein, andere werden gegen euch arbeiten - die richtigen Kontakte sind wichtig. C: Seit ein Tourguide - zeigt ihnen den Ort, bleibt bei ihnen, damit sie die richtigen Stellen zu Gesicht bekommen und die Leute treffen, die einen positiven Eindruck hinterlassen. D: viele Journalisten werden trotz Einladung nicht zum Pressetermin erscheinen, deswegen sollte zumindest eine Person von euch per Handy erreichbar sein (Nummer in die Pressemitteilung schreiben!), um gegebenenfalls ein bisschen Aufregung und Dramatik per Telefon verbreiten zu können. n

Sacar provecho de (en vez de ser explotado por) los media, George Monbiot da unas cuentas notecias para saber comportarse con los periodistas en vuestras acciones. No dejar cualquier persona comunicarse con los media. Conseguir una persona encantadora, persuasiva y bien informada. Ejercitarse con amigos en periodistas hostiles y practicar asi repuestas adecuadas. Poder reconocer cada perodista y saber para quien trabaja. No correr el riesgo de aquellas palabras que podrian volver en contra de usted, volver a tragarselas aunque odia a estos bastardos. No sea sospechoso pero amistoso con cualesquier que sean. Traerlos por los alrededores del sitio y mostrar lo quiere que vean y claro alejarse de lo que no quiere que visitan. Sin estrar indiscreto, quedarse con ellos y hablar un poco de todo subjecto. Al menos es bueno tener en el sitio una persona con un cellular (aquel número de telefono corresponda al contacto de vuestro comunicado de prensa) y lista para responder a las entrevistas en el acto. Sea apasionado en su voz, dando muchas colores para que resientan bien lo que quere mostrar. n

World News

Nouvelles du monde • Nachrichten aus aller Welt • Noticias del mundo



Good evening, and welcome to your global news network, coming to you quarterly from our studio in Lyon, France, with your host, Earth Man.

Hungary

Court Halts Motorway

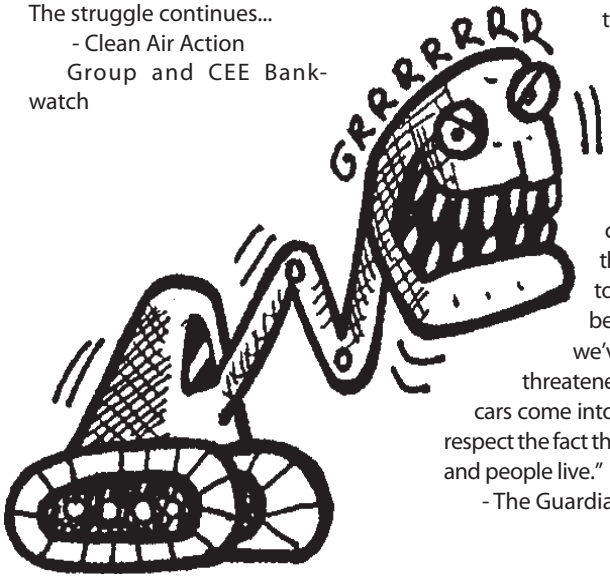
In a precedent-setting case brought by two environmental groups, the Capital Court of Budapest has issued an injunction to halt construction of the northern section of the M0 motorway. In its July 21 decision, the court stated that the new motorway would damage the local environment, endanger the health of tens of thousands of local citizens, and cause economic problems for residents.

Confronted with the motorway's construction, local citizens organised and, with the aid of an environmental law service, had argued that the motorway had been planned without effective public hearings, and that the official environmental impact assessment was disregarded when it proved to be unfavorable.

The European Investment Bank, which is funding the road, stated in response to the criticism that any project it finances has been subject to detailed environmental studies and has received the necessary legal clearances. The CEE Bankwatch network took the case to the E.U. ombudsman. He is now investigating, and asking the European Investment Bank for more detailed information.

In spite of the Capital Court's injunction to halt construction, work on the M0's northern section has not stopped. The struggle continues...

- Clean Air Action Group and CEE Bankwatch



United Kingdom

"Home Zones" Reclaim the Streets

Last night in the pub, someone mused how in a few years time, the government would be holding its own street parties, with ministers opening them and Coca-Cola sponsoring them... Oh how we laughed. And then the following story appeared in the Guardian...

- British activist

Junior drivers with a dubious knowledge of road rules caused traffic chaos in a London street yesterday, but transport minister, Lord Whitty, was unperturbed by the tailback of scooters, tricycles and assorted pedal toys.

He had come to Broughton Road in West Ealing to take part in an open-air tea party complete with armchairs, tables, and a television dragged out into the road—to mark the launch of a scheme that, it is hoped, will see residents reclaim at least some of the streets outside their homes from the motor car.

Ealing is one of nine areas that will pilot the "home zone" project, which puts the rights of people before cars by means of a series of traffic, parking, and design changes.

Based on a Dutch scheme of 6,000 home zones, Ealing hopes to limit vehicle speeds to 10 mph (16 kph), install traffic-calming measures, pedestrianise at least one street, and level the footpath and road in others, to make the area safer and more accessible for residents, especially children.

Charmian Boyd, from a group supporting the project, said that residents had been "enclosed" within their houses too long.

"We would like to reclaim the streets for people, because the bias is totally toward cars." she said.

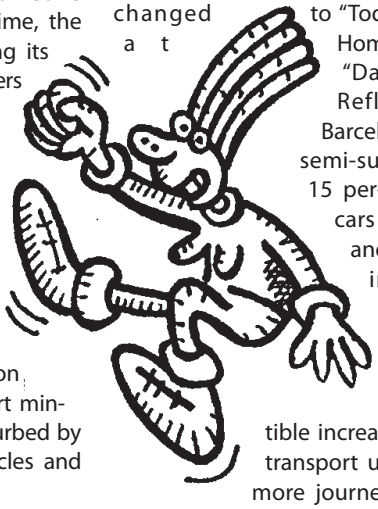
"We aren't anti-car—many of us have them—but we are afraid to let our kids out, and it's become an area where we've become completely threatened by cars. Now, when cars come into this area, they should respect the fact that this is where families and people live."

- The Guardian

Spain

Car-Free Day, Almost

Thursday, April 29, was Car-Free Day in Spain, though the official name changed at the last minute to "Today, the Car Home," and then "Day of Auto-Reflection," In Barcelona it was a semi-success, with 15 per-cent fewer cars in the city and surrounding region, motorised-vehicle-free zones, a perceptible increase in public transport usage, many more journeys on foot, and 400 percent more journeys by bicycle.



However in Madrid the day was a disaster, with only three percent less cars. The Madrid Council joined the initiative just two weeks before the event, and only "recommended" not using cars. Madrid Mayor Avarez del Manzano explained that Barcelona had cheated by closing several streets to traffic, while Madrid didn't due to its "greater sense of freedom."

- Amics de la Bici, Juan Bárcena

The Netherlands

TEN Project to be Cancelled?

The Dutch Transport Minister publicly withdrew her support for the construction of the EUR 2.3 billion North Branch of the rail freight Betuweline, to run from the Rotterdam harbour to the German border. Betuweline is one of 14 priority projects of the E.U.-funded Trans European Networks (TENs).

She proposes the freight trains use other existing rail lines, or wait for the construction of a new rail line further north. Either alternative will probably mean a strong decrease in freight capacity. Some parties in Dutch Parliament are even aiming at cancelling the entire EUR 8 billion Betuweline project, considering existing rail links or improved water transport as viable alternatives.

From the beginning, the project has met serious opposition from local groups, among them GroenFront (EarthFirst! Netherlands), who are squatting areas on the planned route and organising actions.

Contact them at <groenfr@dds.nl>.

Thailand

Cracking Down on Car Phones

Thailand's police department recently requested that the government ban the use of car phones, in the hope of causing a reduction in road accidents. According to the Thailand Health Research Institute, Thailand has the most traffic accidents of any country in south-east Asia. There are an average of approximately 17,000 road deaths and US$2.7 billion in damage each year from traffic accidents, according to the institute.

- Roads and Bridges

Public Transport Means Access for All

Since 1992, Bangkok activists have not only been promoting public transport, but have also been fighting for better accessibility for people with disabilities.

Demonstrations in Bangkok were held and an international appeal for letters of support went out. Finally, with the new Bangkok Skytrain system about to go into operation, they recently launched a last effort to increase accessability.

Although the source of funding is still unclear, there is a promise to install elevators at some stations, connected to other public transport branches such as the Bangkok Subway, which is under construction, and intercity bus terminals.

The Bangkok Public Transport Authority will also introduce new wheelchair-accessible buses and run them as a pilot project on two major bus routes.

More details on the campaigns can be seen in the Bangkok Post of June 4, 22, July 8 and August 6: <http://www.bangkokpost.net>.

Contact: Mr Topong Kulkhanchit, DPI-Thailand, dpith@loxinfo.co.th

- Sustran

China

Hong Kong Goes World Class

Ambitious plans for expansion of the Hong Kong's road system are being finalised—a masterplan which will result in US$13.6 billion being spent on 74km of new highways over the next ten years.

According to Highways Department project manager for major works, Bob Lloyd, several massive schemes are set to start within the next few years, along with the construction of two more "world-class" bridges.

Ukraine

Kyiv is about to suffocate

In Soviet days a line of six cars in Kyiv was called a traffic jam. Today the traffic around central streets appears to be getting almost as heavy as in some Western capitals.

Official data from Kyiv City Statistics Commitee back up this impression—the number of cars in Kyiv has, at least, more than doubled over last eight years. The number of private cars in the capital was about 360,000 last year, compared to 150,000 cars registered in Kyiv at the end of 1990.

"The number of cars in Soviet times didn't increase even remotely as quickly as it does now," said Olexi Rezvy, an economist with the Kyiv City Statistics Commitee's transport department.

The city's statisticians are buffled in particular by the impressive rise in the number of foreign-made cars in Kyiv, Rezvy said.

The hundreds of thousands of new vehicles have brought new concern to the traffic police. Mykola Shynkar, Spokesman for the Kyiv city traffic police, said traffic cops are particularly worried by the exhaust pollution and problems with road infrastructure.

"Don't even ask me about parking lots—we don't even know how to sort out problems with intersections," said Shynkar. "The number of cars is approaching that in the West. But if they [in the West] had such a huge portion of cars with 20-year-old engines, they'd suffocate instantly."

- Kyiv Post

Madrid-Kiev Highway

Ukraine's portion of a four-lane highway stretching from Madrid to Kiev is under way, with the help of foreign investment, it is reported. Foreign contractors engaged in the project will have the right to build any highway amenities they want for 20 years.

Israel

Highway Section Approved

A 17km segment of the Trans-Israel Highway has been approved by the National Council for Planning and Construction. The section includes two tunnels and 1.5 km of bridges.

Stretching between Nahal Lyon and Wadi Milek, near Elyakim, this section brings to 108km the total distance covered by the project's approved segments.

Road Industry Takes Advantage of the War

With over 50 bridges destroyed and over 100 major roads damaged in the war in Yugoslavia, the road industry has its ears perked up, ready to snap up contracts for repairs that will supposedly take a generation to finish.

Bosnia's and Kosovo's economies are managed by Western neo-liberal investment banks that have been pushing for road building all over the East, and the dollars are now flowing in to complete the colonisation.

Looking through the last couple issues of the industry's World Highways magazine, interest in the Balkans seems abnormally high.

"In Kosovo the race is on to undertake reconstruction, but overseas contractors... are likely to face stiff local competition," says one article. "Speed will be of the essence in both preparing projects and offering tenders..."

Another article is hopeful about Albania's road traffic expected to rise 10 percent per year in coming years.

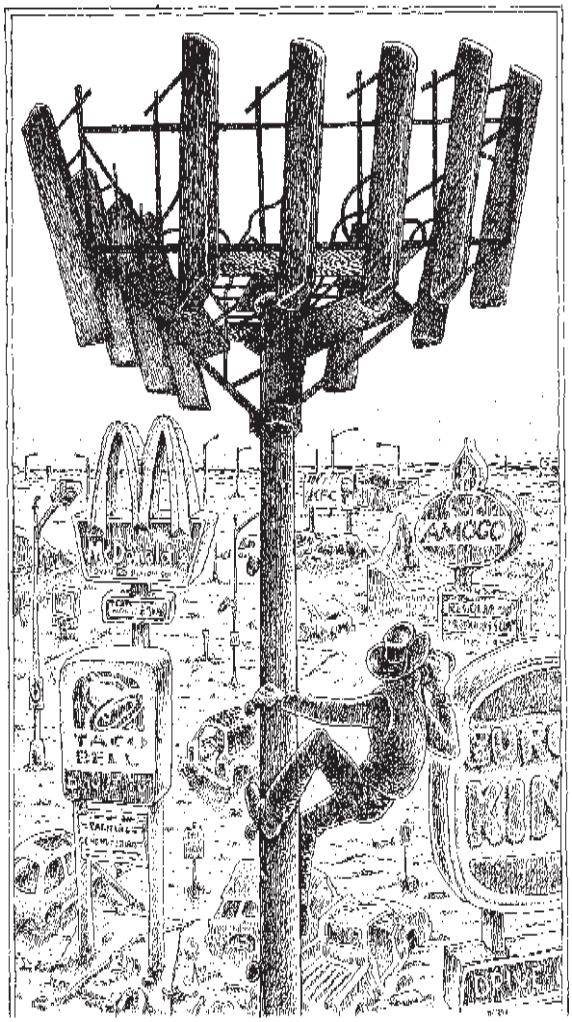
"Albania's ongoing Public Investment Programme priority for transport is to improve and develop the existing... infrastructure in accordance with the needs of a market economy," it says. "[But] it is evident that the Albanian government ...has neither the financial or human resources, nor the expertise necessary for the implementation of a major road development plan."

Why the writers prioritise roads in one of Europe's poorest countries comes down to their industry's economic interest, though they will all say more roads equal a better economy—a widely disproven idea.

Most tellingly, a third article tells us "the collapse of socialism and the break-up of the Soviet Union [along with the move to market economies] ...has unleashed an ever-increasing demand for road transport, and opened up new possibilities for the development of Europe's infrastructure."

According to a report by European Construction Research completed before the NATO bombings, traffic in Eastern Europe will increase by a factor of ten by 2010, with car numbers increasing 70 percent.

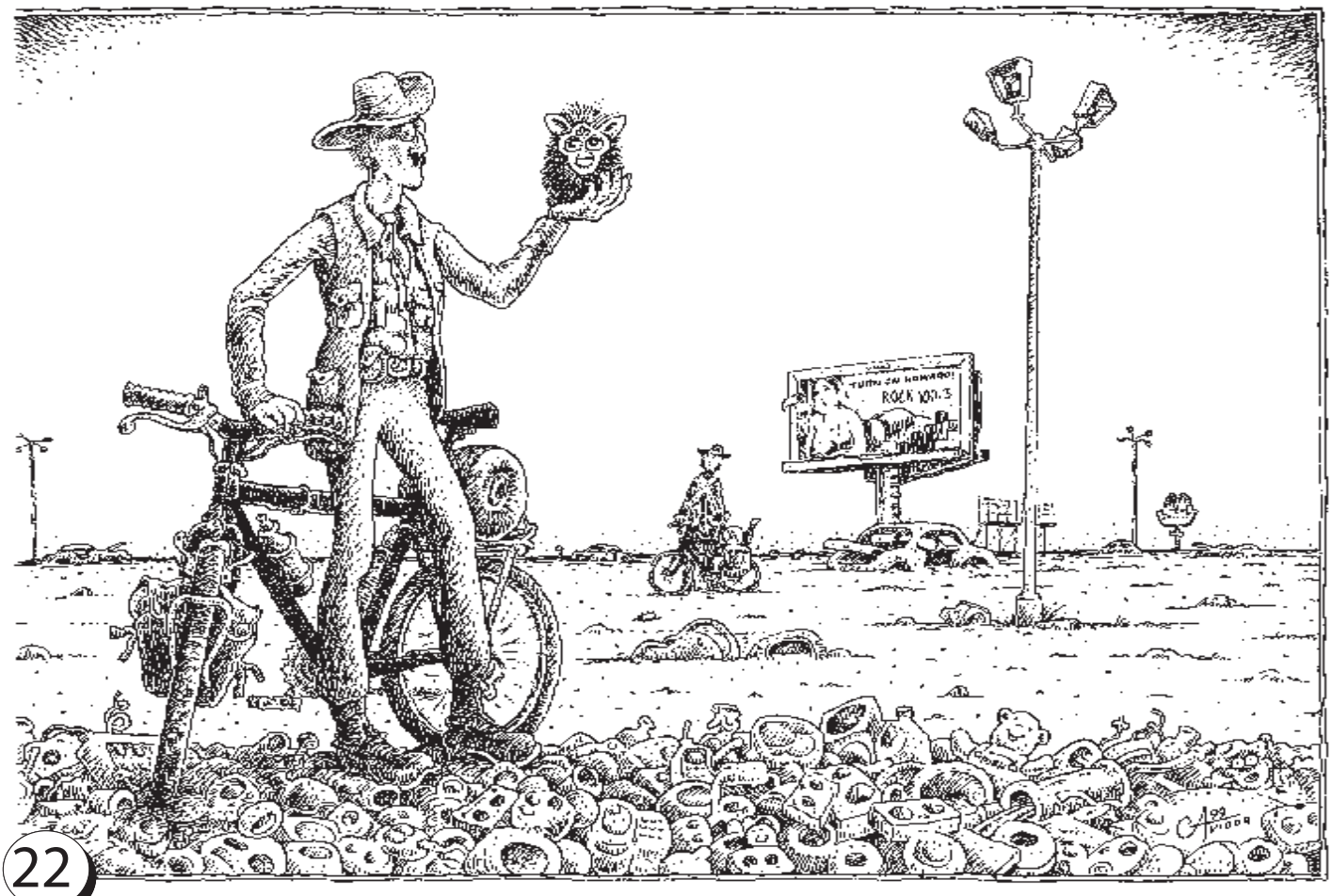
But what's going on in your corner of the world? Send in your news, photos and letters! And if you're interested in writing a feature article, contact Car Busters, and we'll see what we can do...

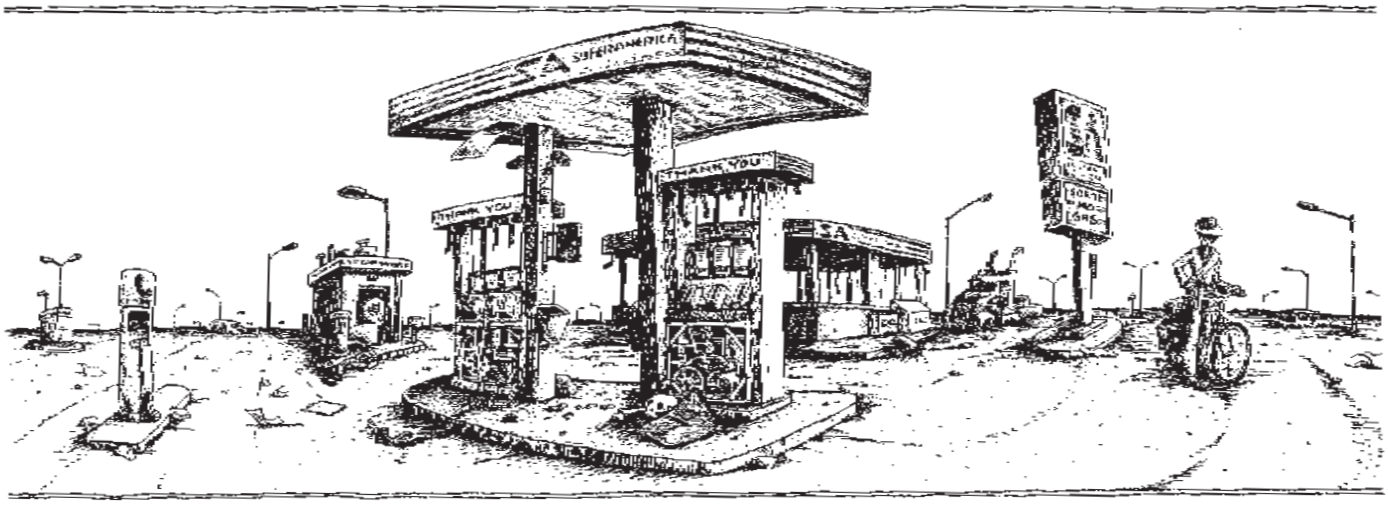


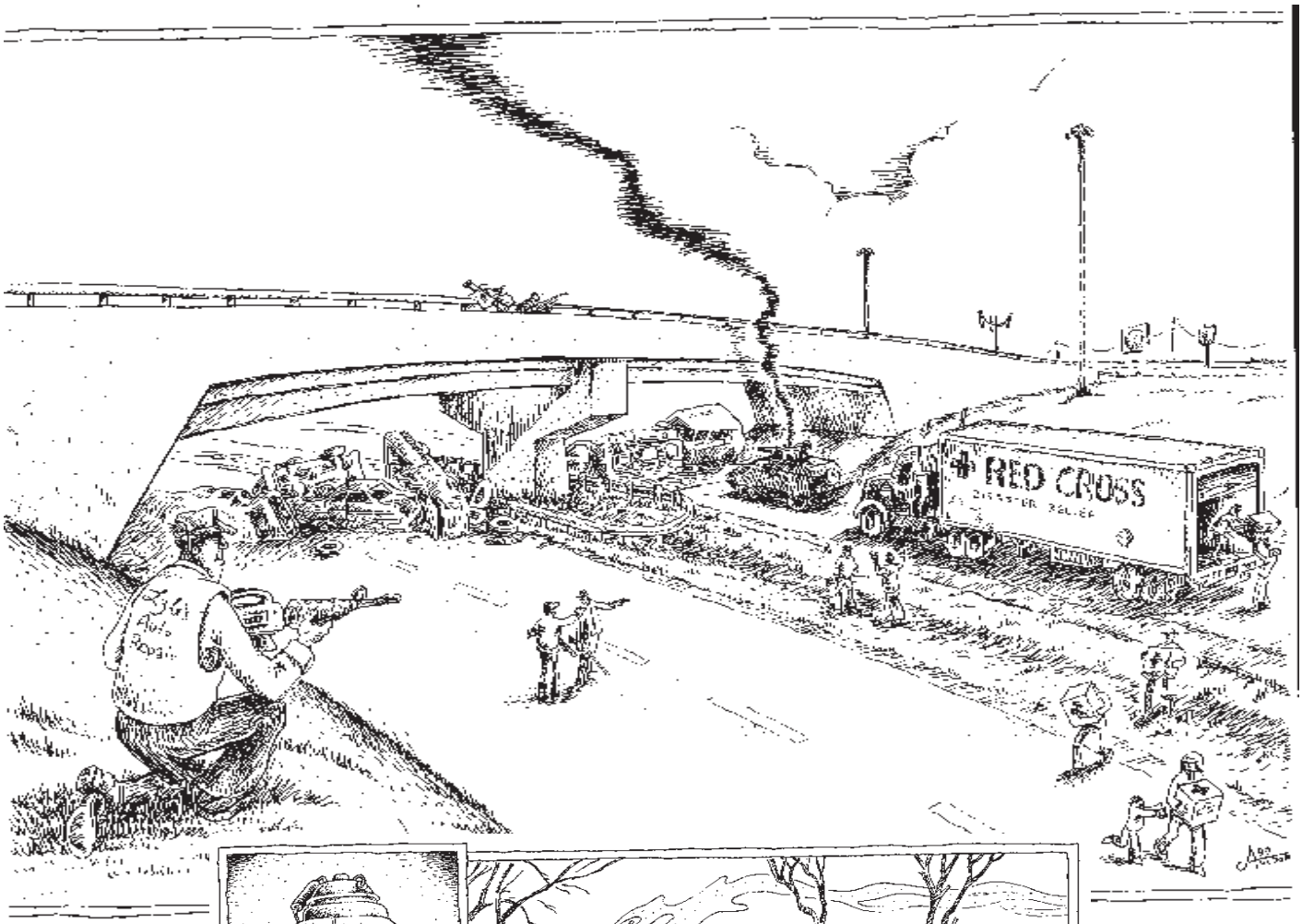
Futurescapes

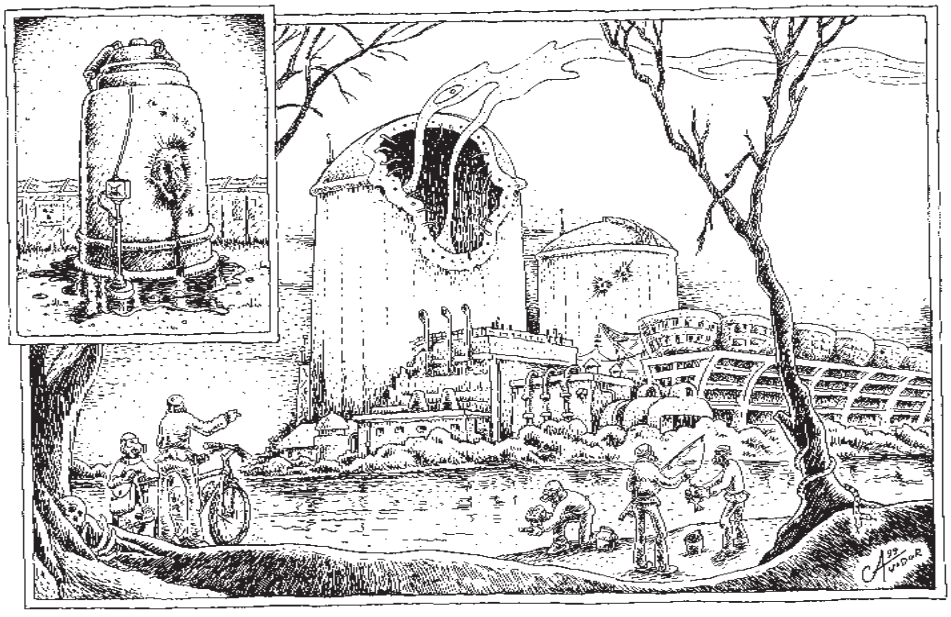
Ken Avidor

Years ago I read about the rapid depletion of oil reserves throughout the world, how the entire supply would be gone early in the next century. I began to imagine the consequences for our fossil-fuel-addicted and automobile-dependent civilisation. After a great deal of research I realised that a shortage of oil would mean a catastrophe that words alone could not describe. My goal as an artist is to bring that future into focus so that more people will choose a sustainable way of life over suicidal consumerism.





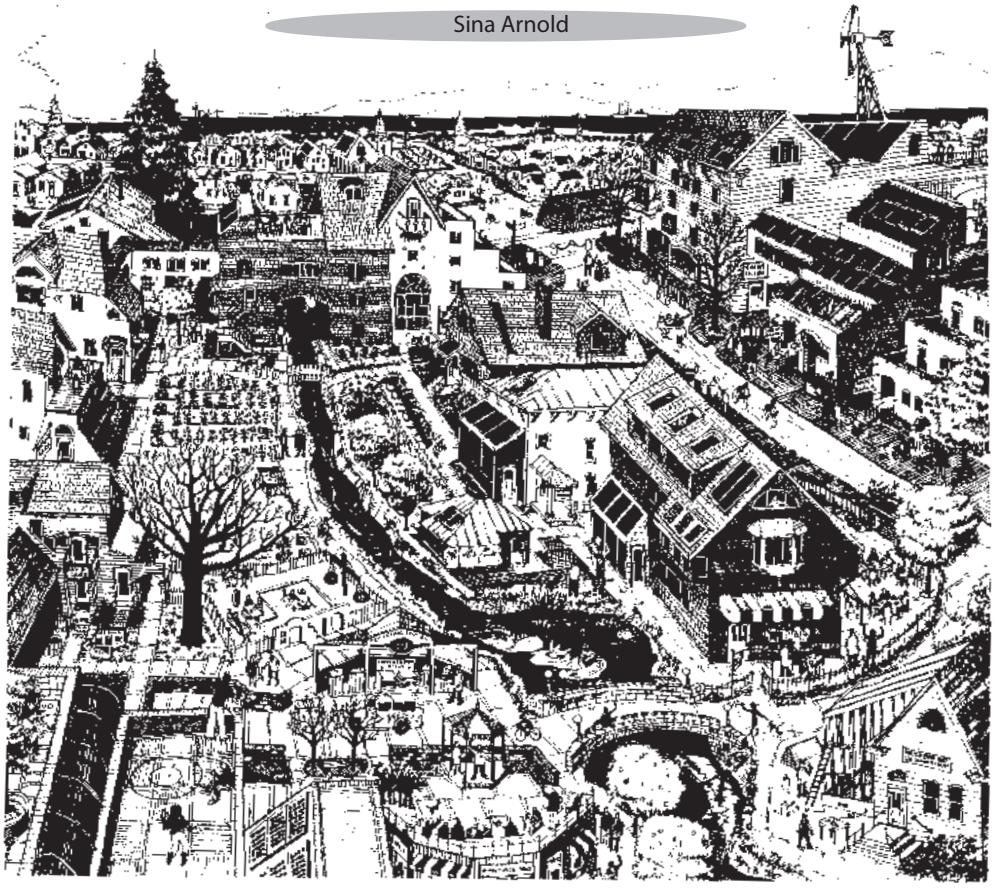




Ken Avidor lives in Minneapolis, USA, where he actually makes a living as an artist. It's a pity he doesn't make any money out of Car Busters.

Urban Ecocity Visions

Sina Arnold



Cities are taking over the planet, bringing with them a wave of pollution and anonymity. Nature and civilisation seem to embody contradictions, so which do we choose? Or could there be a way to combine the two while maintaining the well-being of people and the environment alike? The concept of Ecocities tries to do just that.

"Ecological cities are about balance within human society as much as they are about balance between humans and nature."

- Paul Downton, Urban Ecology Australia

The city. Seen by many as a concrete hell, packed with polluting cars, towering skyscrapers and people rushing by, ignoring each other. Self-sufficiency and sustainability are foreign words in this asphalt jungle. An environmentalist's nightmare.

And yet people have always felt attracted to the city and its advantages: the cultural events, the possibilities for communication and action, the excitement of diversity.

The U.N. estimates that shortly after the year 2000, 50 percent of humanity will be living in urban areas. We are about to become a predominantly urban species for the first time in history and it is obvious that we need to work on transforming our existing cities into more ecologically healthy places if we are to lessen their negative impacts.

Some environmentalists have been seeking ways to keep up the city's advantages and get rid of its negative points, and are putting these approaches into action. They are trying to build ecocities, human habitats embracing nature, and are thus advocating cities that are part of, not separate from, the natural environment.

"Ecocities are about community, real community, they are not about simplistic notions of "sustainability" that tidy up our energy performance and keep everything else the same as it ever was."

- Urban Ecology Australia

Today, there are hints of what could be called ecocity existing in a lot of towns already–free bike programs, community gardens, pedestrian zones…Unfortunately, people see them as solutions in isolation and never quite complete the creation of a fitting frame, thus lessening the impact they could have.

The creation of an ecocity calls for more long-range perspectives than does the usual habit when building and planning cities and other features of our society. Changes need to be made at the level of causes.

Forming a "green city" means more than just separating your garbage and putting a patch of green in the middle of an intersection, it means keeping the bigger picture in mind and remembering that a city should be a healthy and vital place for interactions and closeness, to nature as well as to fellow human beings.

"Ecologically sustainable development means (…) working to change the product—cities—by changing the process."

- Urban Ecology Australia

On a more practical level, an ecocity would call for a whole new urban outline because it means getting rid of one of the most destructive agents in today's towns: the car. The idea is to design cities in a way that the car becomes obsolete–a restructuration which makes both work and leisure destinations easily accesible. Therefore, cities need to be built in a more compact way–imagine a three-dimensional space rather than a flat one. But, unlike today's booming city centres, this high density needs to be combined with mixed uses. So-called "integral neighbourhoods" could serve various functions: corner stores can be in the same block as offices, private houses, gardens, theatres, schools, and natural elements. Thus if people become less car-loving, attempts can be made to drastically reduce the number of cars if not removing them from the city altogether. Imagine today's wide roads used for urban community gardens, visualise the colourful multi-purpose neighbourhoods that ecocities bring with them, a restored creek burbling

Further reading:
Richard Register: "Ecocity Berkeley: Building Cities for a Healthy Future," North Atlantic Books; <ecocity@apc.org>.

through the middle of town, meadows instead of parking lots, a little municipal forest—and suddenly a city doesn't resemble hell after all.

Working on transport issues can thus also include working on shaping our cities—after all, we need to create the new surroundings which make the use of the car obsolete.

"The garden is the paradise of nature, and the city is the paradise of culture…If we build the ecocity we will regain the garden and finally aspire to the full ideal of the city—the city built with, not against nature."

- Richard Register, "Ecocity Berkeley"

But where to start? Just like Rome wasn't build in a day, a city like London couldn't be turned into an ecocity within a week. Why not begin on a smaller scale?

What's most important is to start educating people about positive approaches, about the alternatives there are to the recent "I-hate-my-job-yet-need-to-finance-my-car-so-I-can-get-to-work" attitude. We can start taking an active part in planning our cities, even if it means hassling with bureaucracies and lobbying. For this, different interest groups can work together—bike groups, anti-car activists, senior citizens' clubs...in a joint effort, steps can be taken towards transforming the present situation.

For sure a supportive and dedicated community should stand behind a developing ecocity. Creating an ecologically sound habitat should go hand in hand with a willingness to visualise new ways of acting and living together. Once the towers of our present cities are crumbling there might be space for a more caring, more personal way of interacting with each other and our natural environment.

Ecocity Under Threat

Changing our present human habitats into flowering ecocities–an impossible task?

Urban Ecology Australia, a small, non-profit organisation, has proven the opposite. "Over the best part of this last decade, hundreds and hundreds of volunteers have contributed to the shaping and refining of plans for what we have called 'the world's first piece of ecocity'", explains one of their members. The Halifax Ecocity project is a community-driven development based around local consultation, democratic management and enthusiasm.

Halifax would be an ecocity within the "regular" city of Adelaide in southern Australia. Around 800-1000 people can live here and benefit from Halifax's eco-features (see box below).

So far the plan.

The original concept for the Halifax Ecocity was developed through years of public discussion and input. After overcoming several obstacles, construction was finally set to start in 1997. The Adelaide City Council gave instructions for the development of the former dumpsite that reflected just about everything Urban Ecology had said should be done, including ecological responsibility and people-oriented planning and design. All seemed fine. continued on page

Ecocity Halifax would include:
apartments • townhouses • low-income housing • co-housing • shops • offices • a meeting hall • cafes • an ecology center • a village square • energy generated by the sun with excess power being fed into the power grid • devices for capturing storm water • recycling of all grey water to be used in reed bed recycling systems • on-site sewage processing • joint laundries etc. in co-housing facilities • non-toxic, allergy-neutral building materials drawn from ecologically sustainable sources • on-site food production • a local LETS scheme • large balconies and rooftop gardens on buildings • additional green spaces as habitat for local animals • low water use plantings with indigenous vegetation favoured • semi-permeable paved public spaces • disabled access for virtually the entire project • pedestrian and bike paths, and, of course, no roads or cars!

TRANSLATION

Traduction • Traduccíon • Übersetzung

Dado que cincuanta por ciento de la humanidad vivira en las ciudades poquito despues del año 2000 y que esas mismas ciudades se ponen mas y mas anónimas, feas y ecologicamente dañosas; parece muy urgente de desarrollar posiblilidades para llegar a un modo de vida mas durable, particularmente dentro de estas cuidades. Algunos activistas ecologistas tratan de favorecer la idea de "Ecociudades". Ellos se aproximan de la conexión perdida entre la naturaleza y la cultura y imaginan una ciudad construida con, y no en contra, de la naturaleza. Cuando transformamos nuestras ciudades actuales, hay que tener en cuenta que aquellos cambios sean hechos desde el nivel de las causas: el coche llega a ser obsoleto porque las ciudades serian construidas de una manera mas compacta y los barrios servirian para varios usos: de oficinas, departamentos y almacenes, todos aquellos cerca de uno a otro.

Otras particularidades podrian incluir: paneles solares, volver a restablecer arroyos, huertos, proyectos de vias de biciclettas, etc. Una ecociudad deberia ser no solamente un espacio para un modo de vida y de trabajo durable y soportable pero tambien invitar a unos cambios dentro de las interacciones humanas: las buenas posturas democráticas y el compromiso de la comunidad parecen mas que necesarios para construir una real alternativa respecto al modo de vida actual.

En realidad, ya existe algunas ecociudades (y otras planificadas) por ejemplo: "Halifax" ubicada en Adelaïde en el Sur de Australia. Con bastantes apoyos, el grupo "Urban Ecology" desarrollo estos ultimos años, planos para esta ciudad, y aun cuando ellos soportan muchos problemas en estos momentos, sigan la lucha y estan incluso haciendo otra pequiña y cercana ecociudad: "Whitmore Square" en el centro de Adelaïde. n

Angesichts der Tatsache, dass über 50% der Weltbevölkerung sehr bald in Städten leben wird, und dass eben diese zunehmend anonymer, hässlicher und umweltschädlicher werden, scheint es dringend notwendig, gerade hier Möglichkeiten für eine nachhaltigere Lebensweise zu eröffnen.

Einige UmweltaktivistInnen versuchen daher, die Idee der "Ecocity" voranzutreiben. Sie erstreben die verlorengegangene Verbindung von Natur und Kultur und stellen sich eine Stadt vor, welche mit, nicht entgegen der Natur gebaut ist. Bei der Transformierung bestehender Städte muss daher an der Wurzel angesetzt werden: der Gebrauch des Autos wird durch ein kompaktere Bauweise und die Verbindung von Gebieten mit Büros, Wohnhäusern und Läden vermieden, es gibt Sonnenkollektoren, ein wiedererschlossener Fluss fliesst durch die Mitte der Stadt, Gemüse wird angebaut etc.

Es geht jedoch nicht nur um einen Ort, an dem ökologisch gelebt und gewirtschaftet werden kann, sondern auch um das Ändern des zwischenmenschlichen Miteinanders: demokratischere Entscheidungsformen und Engagement auf Gemeindeebene sollten hier unumgänglich sein, um eine wahrhaftige Alternative zum derzeitig vorherrschenden Lebensstil zu schaffen.

Tatsächlich gibt es bereits Ecocities, welche ins Leben gerufen wurden oder werden sollen, so zum Beispiel in einem Stadtteil Adelaides in Südaustralien. Die Gruppe "Urban Ecology Australia" hat über mehrere Jahre mit grosser Beteiligung der lokalen Bevölkerung die Pläne für die Ecocity "Halifax" entwickelt. Trotz momentaner Probleme wird das Projekt vorangetrieben, sowie ein weiteres, der Ecocity-Stadtteil "Whitmore Square," gebaut. n

You don't need to have a PhD to find out about what the PhDs are doing... Car Busters guarantees 100% non-academic language in this section—or your money back.

Car Industry Threatens Kyoto

Evidence suggests that the already modest CO_2 reduction commitments made by the E.U. under the Kyoto Protocol will not be met.

In the first six months of this year, Western Europe has seen an increase of eight percent in new car sales, signifying an extra 8.1 million vehicles on the road.

In July, European Fuels News reported on the progress of the BP-Amoco commitment to cut its noxious emissions by 10 percent from its 1990 levels, by 2010. The merged companies risk missing this target, due to "the increase of vehicles, and so of [fossil] fuels."

Despite reductions in emissions during 1998, the report states that CO_2 levels in the atmosphere have not dropped below 1990 levels (calculated using the carbon equivalency formula adopted by the International Panel on Climate Change).

- Transport and Environment

More Die from Car Pollution than Road Accidents

Road traffic is the fastest growing source of pollution in Europe and in some countries more people are dying as a result of this air pollution than are being killed in accidents, health experts said on June 15.

A new report by the World Health Organisation (WHO) showed long-term air pollution from cars in Austria, France and Switzerland triggered an extra 21,000 premature deaths per year from respiratory or heart diseases, more than the total number of annual traffic deaths in the three countries.

"The growing evi-dence that air pollution is causing a major health burden adds to the effects of road traffic through noise, accidents and barriers to cycling and walking, and we need to address this head on," stated Dr. Carlos Dora of the WHO.

- Reuters

Transport Improvements Equal Economic Growth?

A report published August 9 by the British Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions tackles the effect of new roads and public transport improvements on the economy.

The study rejects the claims of "some authors" that public investment (including highway construction) leads to great economic growth, saying that evidence from experience is "weak and disputed." Growth may occur "but on a smaller scale than has been claimed" and any growth in a mature economy with well-developed transport "is likely to be modest."

Part of the problem, the report explains, comes from cost calculations, which tend to ignore "environmental costs," even though these do affect the economy.

Problem two is that studies predicting the consequences of transport changes tend to assume that the economy is perfectly competitive. It is not. If the cost that users pay for transport doesn't include the cost the society pays for congestion and environmental damage (see next study), then new infrastructure could damage the economy. Whereas reducing traffic would be likely to reduce environmental and social costs, and "in doing so, can increase economic welfare."

The "Transport and the Economy" report concludes that without taking into account environmental effects, congestion and other external costs, it is impossible to know if a transport improvement will benefit the economy, or damage it.

The summary report of "Transport and the Economy," by the SACTRA committee of the British department of transport is available at <www.roads.detr.gov.uk/roadnetwork/heta/sactra98.htm> or from Car Busters.

75% Discount for Driving

According to the "Metropolis 2020" report, produced by the Commercial Club of Chicago in association with the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, people in the Chicago metropolitan area pay only 25 percent percent of the real cost of driving to work. The public pays the rest.

- The Economist

Pollution Higher In Vehicle than Out

The California Air Resources Board and the South Coast Air Quality Management District have found that pollution inside vehicles is not only higher than air away from the road, but as much as ten times higher. The July study suggests that people's highest exposure to air pollution may be during the commute to and from work.

The Car Pool Lane Snatch

By opening up underutilised lanes reserved for cars with several passengers to paying cars with only one passenger, congested urban areas are turning squandered highway capacity into an effective congestion-relief tool for very little money, according to a study released by the Reason Public Policy Institute. The study reports that opening the lanes up to a wider variety of users can also help provide funding for expansion and maintenance, as well as provide consumers with time-saving choices. Some U.S. cities have already put this strategy into practise.

Contrary to criticisms that they merely benefit wealthy motorists, surveys of such toll lanes show users are a very diverse group of all income levels.

- Roads and Bridges

[Editors' note: The Reason Public Policy Institue is part of the Reason Foundation, who's funding sources have included Ford, Exxon, Mobil, Chevron and Coca Cola.]

Revolutionary urbanism

Anya Bernstein

"Under the cobblestones, the beach," reads this most famous graffitti on a Parisian wall of 1968, expressing almost everyone's desire for immediate transformation of every aspect of life, including the city and the streets. The street battles and building occupations of '68's near-revolution, and the intoxicating festivity and good vibes in the spring air, were a total surprise for all. Except the so-called "situationists," a group of radical artists and activists, who had long been working towards this uprising. People who defined themselves by the strange word "situationists" claimed that the most effective form of protest today is to construct everyday life situations so as to radically transform the environment around us. This desire brought them to investigate urban environments in which the situations of everyday life are lived and culminated in the notion of "unitary urbanism," a critical study of the city which would account not only for utilitarian architectural concerns but also for the effects of the city atmosphere on the emotions and behaviour of the people. The arrangement of the streets, the shapes, colours and textures of buildings, the messages on the billboards, and the ubiquitous presence of automobiles have specific effects on our emotions and behaviours. Psychogeography, a new discipline which would investigate the laws of such influences, was immediately invented and put to use by the situationists...

"We are bored in the city, there is no longer any Temple of the Sun," one of them, Ivan Cheglov, wrote in 1953, calling for a creation of a new urban environment in his "Formulary for a New City." Attempting to re-invent the city, the situationists provided an alternative to the dehumanising functionalist rationality of the past urban planning, such as that of Georges Haussmann, an architect of the Second Empire. His urban renewal plan aimed at allowing the rapid circ-ulation of troops and the use of artilllery against uprisings. Haussmann's Paris, therefore, makes sense only from the point of view of police control, otherwise being "full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." Today, cities are built to ensure the circulation of a rapidly increasing quantity of motor vehicles, which, according to another major situationist theoretician, Guy Debord, is one of the main problems not only with contemporary urbanism but also with life under capitalism in general.

"The mistake made by all urbanists is to consider the private automobile essentially as a means of transportation," he wrote in his "Theses on Traffic" in 1953, claiming instead that the automobile is now at the center of capitalist propaganda, representing both the notion of happiness ("two cars per family") and an alienated life. "The present abundance of private cars is nothing but the result of the constant propaganda by which capitalist production persuades the masses—and this case is one of the most astonishing successes—that the possession of a car is one of the privileges our society reserves for its privileged members," writes Debord. At the same time, he adds, the society's anarchical progress negates itself: a police officer urging Parisian car owners to use public transport is nothing but absurd. It's not going to work if the "parasitical existence of private automobiles" remains urbanism's central theme.

"The crisis in urbanism is worsening," one of the situs, Constant, prophetically wrote in 1959. Read the following words and you won't believe it was written more than 40 years ago: "The construction of neighbourhoods, ancient and modern, is in obvious disagreement with established forms of behaviour and even more so with the new forms of life that we are seeking. The result is a dismal and sterile ambiance in our surroundings. In the older neighbourhoods, the streets have degenerated into freeways, leisure activities are commercialised and denatured by tourism. Social relations become impossible there. The newly-constructed neighborhoods have but two motifs, which dominate everything: driving by car and comfort at home. They are the abject expression of bourgeois well-being, and all ludic preoccupations are absent from them."

Thirty years after the cobblestones were hurling through the air, the image of the barricades in the middle of the traffic jam night-mare still captures the imagination of activists and dreamers. Last summer, London Reclaim The Streets, for example, featured the turning of a road into a children's sandbox and looked like a direct continuation of situationist ideas. "The hacienda must be built"—this situationist phrase, enjoying significant popularity in contemporary protest culture, shows the urgent longing for a global transformation of social reality that goes beyond urbanism or traffic. n

The quotes in this article were taken from "The Situationist Anthology" edited by Ken Knabb. To learn more about the situationists, read "Society of the Spectacle" by Guy Debord, "Revolution of Everyday Life" by Raoul Vaneigem, or the academic history of situationist architectural theory "The Situationist City" by Sadler.

Announcements

Annonces • Ankündigungen • Anuncios

Have something to announce to the rest of the car-free movement? Send it in by December 15 for the winter issue. Believe it or not, it will cost you nothing.

Meet Your Minister

An E.U. Transport Ministers meeting will take place in Warsaw, October 14 and 15. "There are serious plans for some actions..."

Contact Frank at A SEED, PO Box 92066, 1090 AB Amsterdam, The Netherlands; or electronically at <frank@aseed.antenna.nl>.

TransMission

TransMission, the Canadian sustainable transport publication, is grinding to a halt after seven years. Especially for Car Busters readers, they offer all eight back issues and the final issue for CAN$12 or US$10.

Contact Transmission at 761 Queens St. West, Suite 101, Toronto, ON M6J 1G1, Canada.

Take a Detour

Detour Publications, which specialises in mail-order books on transport and urban ecology, is going high tech and on-line. Besides credit card internet shopping, their new website (<www.web.net/~detour>) includes lots of links to other resources and publications. If you'd rather stick to humble old paper, their catalogue is also available from Detour Publications, at the same address as TransMission (above).

Art and Activism On-Line

British designers and activists are compiling a virtual gallery of radical art, to go on-line in October—subverts, spoofs, music, poetry, banners, costumes and more. Called Counterfeet, they hope to inspire, illustrate and promote creative campaigning across all social, environmental, and animal justice issues. Plans include downloadable environmental designs, contacts for artists and campaigners, ready-to-print sticker designs, ideas for local involvement, theory, tips, articles, links to spoof-websites...

Counterfeet needs more contacts and contributions. Counterfeet, c/o Box G, 101 Magdalen Road, Oxford, OX4 1RG; <counterfeet@excite.com> (files smaller than 200 kb only).

Oilwatching in the East

Oilwatch Europe has launched a new e-mail list on the social and environmental effects of the oil and gas industries in the area between the Baltic Sea and the Bering Strait, the Arctic Ocean and the Caspian Sea. It aims to spread information about what is happening in the region, and link up different organisations and people interested, potentially encouraging joint projects.

Send an e-mail containing only "subscribe oilwatch-neftegaz" to <majordomo@freeteam.xs4all.nl>.

Third International Aviation Action Day

On October 29 and 30, join other groups around the world protesting against the impact of aviation on neighbourhoods and the environment. Contact the Right Price for Air Travel campaign, which will send draft press releases, background information and a slogan to help with your local action.

PO Box 19199, 1000 CD Amsterdam, the Netherlands; <ilse.chang@milieudefensie.nl>.

New TENs Report

A 24-page report on Trans- European Networks and Environ-mental Impact Assessment is now available, as a (free) e-mail or attached Word document, or (for a small contribution) on paper.

Contact Frank at A SEED (address under "Meet Your Minister").

Buy Nothing Day

The eighth Buy Nothing Day will be fighting consumerism and the West's tendency to eat the so-called Third World to death, on November 26 in Australia, New Zealand and North America, and on November 27 in Europe. But not buying anything doesn't happen by itself! Get involved in organising.

See <www.ddh.nl/bnd> or contact Car Busters for more information.

Shut Down the WTO

From November 29 to December 3, leaders of governments and transnational corporations will attend the World Trade Organization's Summit in Seattle, USA, to further their control over our future. The Resistance, Street Theatre and Nonviolent Direct Action Festival will be protesting from November 20, with "tens of thousands" of participants expected.

Phone +1 (415) 339-7801 or see <www.agitprop.org/artandrevolution>.

Bust-

Announcements

We Want You! Come Work at Car Busters

Car Busters will be taking on two new people to grace our office in Lyon, beavering away for a year on this lovely magazine. To apply you must be under 26, a legal resident of the E.U., Iceland, Norway, or one of the Mediterranean basin countries, and you must apply now! Yep, this is your last warning—the deadline is September 30.

Contact Car Busters. Now!

Towards Car-free Cities II

After a minor funding crisis, the conference has been postponed to April. Focusing on Eastern Europe avoiding the transport mistakes of the West, the conference will be happening from April 10-15 in Krakow, Poland. To join the organising listserve, send an e-mail to <majordomo@eyfa.org> with "subscribe traffic" in the body of the message. If you would like to be a national contact or help with translating and distributing the outreach statement in Central and Eastern European countries, contact Matus at Slobodna Alternativa, Starometska 6, 81103 Bratislava, Slovakia, or at <sa@changenet.sk>.

Parlez-Vous Français?

As of this very issue, Car Busters has a French supplement. Four pages of entire articles translated into French will be inserted in all magazines going to Francophonic countries. If you would like to receive the supplement (and aren't already), or would like to help with translation, let us know. And if anyone wants to start organising a German supplement with us, or a Lithuanian, or a Greek...

Alternatives: Send 'Em In

Issue seven, unless we change our minds, will be on alternatives to car dependence. If you have any ideas or proven solutions, wacky or realistic, send them to us.

...Ecocities

continued from page 25

Yet a complicated process evolved, leaving Urban Ecology with "the strong impression that these expert planners were convinced that they knew best in respect of all aspects of the Halifax Site redevelopment (...)and that the 'community', as far as they were concerned, did not have the knowledge on which to base good decisions," explains Paul Downton. Eventually, the council planners came up with their own urban design for the site that bears little relation to the original ideas, and is a million miles away from being the ecologically thoughtful development envisioned. In fact, it shows the site bisected by two wide north-south roads and three smaller east-west roads.

Urban Ecology, enraged, formally withdrew its involvement as consultants to the development, for now. Far from giving up, they are currently rallying their troops and lobbying the city. The outcome is uncertain, but to them, even a failure would be an achievement. Because, as Urban Ecology states, "we did succeed in getting a progressive and challenging development proposal taken seriously. And all we had to work with was community energy and a vision."

Meanwhile, a second project launched by the group last October is alive and kicking, with construction to start soon: the Whitmore Square Ecocity consists of two small pieces of land near the Halifax site on which townhouses, apartments, a straw- bale cottage, offices and a mud-brick community house will be built.

The entire development programme has been initiated and sustained by an active local community of families, businesses and neighbourhood organisations. The development will be "community titled" and self-managed as a district corporation.

The funding is entirely from private and ethical financing sources.

The interest in the Whitmore Square Ecocity Project so far has been excellent and the signs for the project are good. In fact, the site history has recently been investigated, and it was discovered that an old stone building backing onto the site was originally the barn for Adelaide's first horse-drawn trams! The spirit of the site's renewable energy transport history is supported by the Whitmore Ecocity's emphasis on an urban form which encourages walking and cycling, and excludes motor vehicle traffic. n

c Help Halifax c

If you, too, wish to support this car-free urban development, you can help by sending letters and e-mails of protest to the Adelaide City Council –which would be greatly appreciated by Urban Ecology. Let them know what you think. Get in touch with people from the organization and learn more about their plans, visions and need for help:

- Centre for Urban Ecology
84 Halifax Street
Adelaide SA 5000, Australia
<urbanec@metropolis.net.au>
<www.urbanecology.org.au>
- Adelaide City Council
c/o City of Adelaide, GPO Box 2252,
Adelaide SA 5001, Australia
city@adelaide.sa.gov.au

Back cover translation:

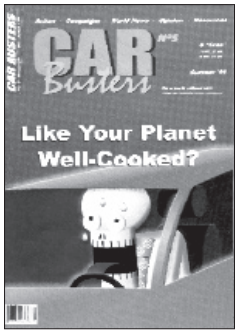
A Manufacturer Takes Out Its Claws

[based on Peugeot's slogan in France]

Having escaped from its cage, we are in hot pursuit of the monster responsible across the entire planet for 350,000 deaths and 10 million injured every year. In France alone, the gruesome beast is accused of killing 30,000 people a year—9,000 dying from direct attacks by the animal and 21,000 others following the wake of its killing spree. The danger it poses to its environment even threatens its own existence. Our agents are on the trail of a certain Jacques C. [could that be the well-known president of Peuneot?...], suspected of having produced the rabid animal to make his fortune. n

Sale Now On! Bargain Basement Prices! Buy, Buy, Buy!

CAR Busters
"Towards Car-Free Cities Takes France by Storm"
"Vers des villes sans voitures déboule la France"
"Hin zu autofreien Städten" erobert Frankreich im Sturm



Car Busters has many old issues of the magazine, sitting around in boxes. Which is hardly a useful thing for them to be doing. If you would like to order single copies, send us 5 Ecos per issues, which includes postage (yippee! Bargain! Super!) If you would like to order 5 or more copies of a single issue, to distribute, we would be eternally grateful, and so are selling them at 3 Ecos each including postage ("Where would I be without Car Busters bargains?"). Sell them for a bit more, and keep the profits for your group.

Resources

Ressources • Materialien • Recursos

The all-new Car Busters autumn range of très chic mail order items will make you the best looking (okay, best resourced) activist on the streets.

Direkte Aktionen oder Die kleine Blockadefibel

The best parts of the infamous Road Raging: Top Tips for Wrecking Roadbuilding manual, all in German. Tips on how to organise road camps, street parties, crane blockades, plus carwalking and subvertising, information on group process and legal issues, plus lots of cutesy, helpful drawings and photos.

Send 6 Ecos to brush up your German!

Wise Fool Basics

Giant puppet building, puppet masks, tips and tricks for street theatre, how to build stilts, lanterns. This fantastic book by K. Ruby of Wise Fool Puppet Intervention is full of useful information for making actions eye-catching, imaginative and endlessly creative.

Available for 16 Ecos. North Americans should order the book directly from Wise Fool, 2633 Etna Street, Berkeley CA 94709, priced on a sliding scale from US$7 to $15, plus $2 postage.

The Art and Science of Billboard Improvement

Brought to you by the Billboard Liberation Front and "friends," this nifty 12-page booklet gives you all the pratical details for altering advertising billboards to say something a little more socially responsible.

Send 2.5 Ecos to get started.

Family Mouse Meets The End of the Road

The illustrated children's book "Family Mouse Behind the Wheel" teaches children at a young age the problems of car culture, with a healthy dose of anthropomorphism and a smattering of English text.

The classic "The End of the Road: From World Car Crisis to Sustainable Transportation," however, requires one's full attention, being 300 pages of solid information analysing today's predicament and offering a range of solutions.

Each available for 20 Ecos.

Car "Cancer" Stickers

Big, hard-to-remove "cancer warning" stickers for cars. Available in French, German or English. 10 Ecos for 25 stickers.

English Version:

> Warning: This vehicle emits carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, sulphur dioxide, hydrocarbons, benzene, methane, aldehydes and VOCs. Causes respiratory disease, cancer, death and ecocide. Especially harmful to other species and children.

Stickers for Selfishly Parked Cars

Fight back against cars parked on pavements (sidewalks). Stick these "international" mini-stickers on obstructing cars to remind the owners that pavements are for people, not parking.

Send 2 ecos for 25 stickers.

Lost in Concrete

Lost in Concrete, an "activist guide to European transport policies," gives you a thorough look at the Trans-European Networks road schemes. It contains TENs history, who's lobbying for them, their potential effects on health, culture, jobs and regional economies, their alternatives. It also includes lots of general transport information, such as facts on air pollution, climate change and time pollution.

Available for 3 Ecos.

Graphics Booklet / Brochure de Dessins

This 44-page graphics booklet brings together all the best transport-related graphics on file at Car Busters, including information on how to produce attractive posters and fliers. They can be reproduced freely (for non-profit purposes) by local groups for their leaflets, posters, etc.

Specify English or French version; 10 Ecos (plus 2 Ecos postage for those outside Europe).

"Road Raging" Direct Action Manual

Back in print. Edited by a former Earth First! Journal co-editor, it's a 152-page almost comprehensive guide to direct action tactics developed by movements around the world. Includes lots of useful diagrams and illustrations. Get it for 14 Ecos.

Ä = One Less Car

The internationally famous One Less Car sticker has just become multilingual. To explain to drivers that your bike is not a part of the traffic problem, we now have One Less Car in Norwegian/Swedish/Danish, Serbian/Croatian, Romanian and Polish, as well as French, German, Spanish and English. More languages coming soon. The stickers are water-resistant (more so than the last print run) and long and thin (to fit on a bike frame).

5 Ecos for 5, 15 Ecos for 25. Please help distribute these stickers —feel free to re-sell them through your group or infoshop.

"Towards Car-Free Cities I" Conference Proceedings

These 40-page proceedings are both an account of the international gathering that launched Car Busters and a manual for anyone planning a similar event—everything from running a tripod workshop to conference logistics.

Available free by e-mail (Word 6.0 attachment) or 7 Ecos by post.

Lyon Conference Video

This 36-minute video documents the work and actions of the first "Towards Car-Free Cities" conference. Use it to introduce others to the issue or to inspire those already involved.

Available at cost for 15 Ecos. Note: It's in the European "PAL" format.

"Free the Streets" Reader

This 68-page A4-sized publication was produced while preparing the first Towards Car-Free Cities conference. It's filled with articles, ideas, poorly reproduced photos and contacts for car-free activism in Europe. 10 Ecos by post.

Stop-Sign Improvement

Forty-six centimetres long. Bright red. One word: "DRIVING." These big glossy stickers are just the right size to go under the word "STOP" on stop signs. 10 Ecos for five.

La Libérté de Circuler

Publié en 1991 par Colin Ward sous le titre "Freedom to Go: After the Motor Age", ce livre explore la question de la "libre circulation" dans une perspective eco-anarchiste. Cette version française, sous-titrée "Pour en finir avec le mythe de l'automobile", a été publiée à Lyon en 1993.

Disponible à 25 Ecos.

CAR Bust-Subscriptions

English

à Thanks for your interest! Subscriptions cost 24 "Ecos" per year, translated into your country's currency at right. What are Ecos, you ask? See the explanation below right. We accept cash in all major currencies, plus cheques in FF, £ and US$. Cheques in US$ can be sent to Car Busters, PO Box 10141, Berkeley, CA 94709, USA.

Français

à Merci de vous abonner et d'aider à débarrasser votre ville de la voiture. Voyez la troisième colonne à droite pour le prix pour votre pays (82 francs en France, 500 francs en Belgique, 22 francs en Suisse et $19.20 au Canada). Nous acceptons des chèques français, anglais, américains - et de l'argent liquide de tout les pays.

Deutsch

à Danke für Dein Interesse an einem Car Busters Abo! Es kostet 24 "Eco" pro Jahr (Erklärung und Umrechnung in die Währung Deines Landes siehe rechts). In Deutschland überweise bitte 24,- DM an Daniel Sokolov, KontoNr. 5422035 bei Hypo Vereinsbank Berlin, BLZ 10020890. Für Abos in Österreich überweise 175,- ATS an Daniel Sokolov, KontoNr. 00032097298 bei Erste Bank, BLZ 20111. Im Verwendungszweck schreibe «CB ABO», Deinen Namen und E-mail- oder Postadresse. Wir akzeptieren auch Bargeld in allen wichtigen Währungen sowie Schecks ins US$, FF und £.

Español

à Gracias por tu interés en suscribirte a Car Burster y (ojalá) por movilizarte para rescatar tu ciudad de los coches. Las suscripciones cuestan 24 "Ecos" al año, traducidos a la moneda de tu país (a la derecha). ¿Qué son los Ecos, preguntas? Si te interesa lee la explicación abajo a la derecha. Aceptamos dinero en todas las monedas principales, además de cheques en US$, FF y £.

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Albania	*17 Lek*	***408 Lek***
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Bulgaria	*0.16 Leva*	***3.84 Leva***
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Subscribe now! Impress your postman with a shiny new Car Busters in your front yard.

Yes, I'm giving Car Busters all my money because I'm confident that the global economy will collapse in the near future. Please send me the quarterly magazine and/or the items below without delay.

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Germans and Austrians can do direct money transfers. Americans can use our U.S. subscriptions/orders address. See information above.

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Ecos try to balance the differences in value among various currencies in Europe, based on living costs in each country. This way, things cost roughly the same to everyone, regardless of the "strength" of your country's currency. With Ecos, you still use your country's currency. See the middle column in the chart (above) to find the value of an Eco in your country.